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Chicago Fails at Brussels

The Brussels Conference found nothing better to do than to vote a mild reproach to Japan—in which Italy and the Scandinavian countries would not join. Its attempt to mediate failed because Japan would not accept its intervention. And of course it did nothing to implement President Roosevelt's speech at Chicago calling for a united front of peace-loving peoples against the international anarchists. Its complete futility was underlined when France, under Japanese pressure, stopped the transport of munitions to China through French Indo-China. The Brussels failure was predicted by The New Republic, and is a sad commentary on the enthusiasm aroused by Mr. Roosevelt's bold words. The lesson, it seems to us, is so clear that only the most stupid could possibly fail to see it. At the risk of boring our readers with reiteration, we will state it again. There is no use whatever in striking moral attitudes about international behavior and calling for collective security unless the nations that do so are prepared to stop the aggressors by measures that cannot successfully be resisted—measures that may involve the use of armed forces. Resolute action of this kind might prevent the spread of war. But if we, and Britain, and France, and the Soviet Union are not prepared to go this far, the more sensible policy for the United States would be to devote all its energies to keeping out of trouble—and that means strengthening and applying the Neutrality Act of 1937.

To Keep America at Peace

Two proposals have been made in the special session of Congress that are of great importance in relation to foreign policy. One of these is a suggested constitutional amendment, introduced in two forms by Senators Capper of Kansas and La Follette of Wisconsin. Both forms provide that except in case of an actual invasion of this country, Congress shall not declare war until after a referendum by the whole people. The second of the two proposals is a demand that the Neutrality Act be rewritten, taking away from the President the power he now has to say when a war has begun. The purpose, of course, is to enforce the immediate application of the Act to the Sino-Japanese conflict. Our readers hardly need to be told that we are warmly in favor of both these enterprises. The more pressing of the two is the rewriting of the Neutrality Act, since it applies to an existing situation; but the plan for a national referendum before we again send millions of young men overseas to fight as we did in 1917-18 is also of great importance. The special session of Congress has already shown that it is prepared to challenge President Roosevelt on many of his policies. Here are two cases where such an attitude can meet with hearty approval.

Britain in Spain

Italy and Germany helped to start the civil war in Spain, by promising to help the Rebels and by keeping their promise on the very first day of the fighting. That by now is an old story. It is an old story, too, that Britain prolonged the war by bluffing France into closing the Pyrenees, at a time when the government could have stopped Franco with a

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few batteries of field artillery and a hundred modern planes. But Britain's policy since that time is not so easy to determine. The cynics say that she has helped Franco consistently; quite possibly the cynics are not cynical enough. She has helped Franco, yes, but she has also hindered him at moments when it seemed that he might win a speedy victory. She has allowed Italy to send more and more arms to the Rebels, but she has discouraged Italy from sinking Russian ships and thus preventing arms from reaching the Loyalists. Apparently her real policy has been to make the war as long and costly and bloody as possible, so as to weaken both sides. That, in London, is called pacifism. But during the last two months she seems to have changed her policy; quite evidently there are new agreements which have been kept out of the press. It is rumored that the Italian forces in Spain are being reduced to 40,000 men. It is rumored that the blockade is becoming so effective—of course with British permission—that very few Russian arms are reaching Valencia. It is rumored, too, that Russia has ceased sending aid, on account of the more immediate threat from Japan. We don't know just how these pieces of the puzzle fit together. But perhaps the most sinister detail is the fashion in which news from Spain is being played down, not so much by the newspapers, which print the news they are given, as by the various Foreign Offices, which hand out the news. Under cover of this artificial darkness, it seems likely that the powers are preparing some new stroke that could not bear daylight.

Acquittal

James H. Rand Jr., president of Remington, Rand, Inc., and Pearl L. Bergoff, the former head of the well known strikebreaking agency, have been acquitted. They were charged with violation of the Byrnes law, which forbids the transportation of strikebreakers across state lines with the intention of interfering with peaceful picketing. The case grew out of the strike at Remington Rand's plant at Middletown, Connecticut, in June, 1936, where Bergoff sent fifty-seven men from New York by arrangement with Mr. Rand, as was revealed during the National Labor Relations Board's investigation of the industrial conflict. The story that Bergoff and Rand gave the jury, and which the jury accepted, was that Bergoff's men were not strikebreakers at all, but millwrights hired for the purpose of dismantling the plant. According to reports in the daily press, Presiding Judge Carroll Hincks, in his charge to the jury, inferred that the Rand strikers were engaged in "organized intimidation" and that therefore the Byrnes law ought not to apply; said that there is no law against bluffing (thereby giving the lie to the already discredited allegation that the Bergoff men were hired to dismantle the plant); and suggested that he, the judge, and the jurors were in "partnership" together—whatever this may have meant. To many individuals familiar with the facts about the Remington-Rand strike as disclosed by the National Labor Relations Board, the jury's verdict can only seem a miscarriage of justice, and the judge's charge a procedure inexplicable on any ordinary standard of judicial behavior.

The Sit-Down in Pontiac

Another "outlaw" strike in an automobile plant has taken place. About 450 employees in the Fisher Body plant in Pontiac, Michigan, have been engaging in a sit-down strike which forced suspension of operations in the plant. As a result, anti-unionists all over the country have been announcing loudly that collective bargaining is impossible, since the men won't obey their own union officials, etc. Actually, the story is a good deal more complicated than that. It is true that the United Automobile Workers' union has been doing what it could to prevent minor stoppages and that a good many of these have taken place in spite of the union's efforts. It is also true, however, that in many plants workers feel that they have genuine grievances and that the employer refuses to listen to them until they bring the belt line to a halt. Demands are heard that the union keep its workers under control, but nobody proposes that the General Motors Company, for instance, shall keep its foremen under control, and prevent them from persecuting individual workmen under them. Indeed, the suggestion is heard that with the whole contract between GM and the UAW up for negotiation, the corporation is by no means sorry to see trouble like that of the past few days, for its value as a bargaining point. It remains true that the only way for industry to operate successfully in the long run is to convince its workers they will get fair treatment. That hasn't happened yet in automobiles.

Filibuster for Lynching

One of the most unjustifiable filibusters in which the Senate has ever indulged is that directed against the anti-lynching bill. It is conducted almost entirely by Southern Senators—in spite of the fact that a poll by the Institute of Public Opinion indicates that the South, as well as the rest of the country, is in favor of the measure. We do not wish to deny any Southern Senator—or any from the North either—the privilege of opposing the bill if he disapproves of it. It may be unconstitutional, or it may be an ineffective way of handling the problem. But at the very worst its passage could do no harm, and its object is laudable from any point of view. Why not let it come to a vote? The reason for the filibuster is, of course, that if it were voted upon it would be passed. But in choosing this way to deny the will of a majority, the opponents of the bill have been delaying urgent business that Congress will have too short a time to finish in any case. Surely the defeat of this bill is not so important that all other debate must be delayed, including that on farm and labor programs and the international situation. The Southern Senators in question are in effect saying: "It is more necessary to prevent the federal government from making even a dubious attempt to diminish

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lynching than it is to do what we can to restore prosperity and avert war."

For the Sake of the Record

The Senate Civil Liberties Committee has subpoenaed the records of the Johnstown Citizens' Committee, but the investigation is blocked by the announcement that there aren't any such. There is a record of the receipt and disbursement of funds during the progress of the strike against Bethlehem Steel last June, but nothing more illuminating than that. Lawrence W. Campbell, secretary of the Citizens' Committee, has explained that his group was a voluntary and spontaneous assemblage, formed to meet an emergency situation and designed to live only during the duration of that emergency; that on this account there was no necessity for keeping detailed records. In all probability there are only fragmentary records, and for a good reason. The fact about the Johnston Citizens' Committee which is particularly worth concealing is that it was inspired and—at least to the extent of $30,000—financed by the Bethlehem Steel Company as part of its campaign to break the strike. This was brought out during the course of the National Labor Relations Board investigation of the Bethlehem strike. The Citizens' Committee, it was then revealed, acting as the intermediary agent, turned over that amount contributed by the steel company to Mayor Daniel J. Shields of Johnstown when he requested funds "to maintain law and order."

New Mexico's Plan Goes Wrong

In New Mexico there is a reclamation and flood-control project that is in serious difficulty. The Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District is the scene of a large irrigation, drainage and flood-control project. On the land supposedly benefited are several thousand Spanish-American subsistence farmers who have not, and never have had, cash with which to pay heavy assessments on their farms. Naturally, they are delinquent, and are threatened with eviction—which throws a pretty light on the philanthropic character of the plan. (Thus far the chief beneficiaries have been the city of Albuquerque and the Santa Fe Railroad.) The scheme was based from the beginning on the false assumption that these subsistence farmers could be changed overnight into successful American ranchers, without having the land, the facilities, the market, or the slow and thorough training necessary for such a transformation. Unless some 25,000 Spanish-American farmers and their families are to be dispossessed and thrown on relief, the project must be reorganized on a realistic basis, beginning with the canceling of the present unjust and impossible assessment.

Klan in Miami

One way to clean up the vice dens of a city is to smash them to bits. That is the way the members of Miami's Ku Klux Klan chose when they sent a band of hooded raiders to end the revelries at the La Palomar night club by assaulting the entertainers and breaking up the furniture. According to reports, the managers of other Miami hot spots, fearful that the Klan's violence might next be turned against them, have boarded up their establishments and left town. The terrorism in Miami is typical of the Ku Klux Klan, which occasionally tries to do a worthwhile job but always with the wrong weapons. There is little doubt that Miami's night life needed cleaning up; it is a city that depends for its economic existence on unlicensed gayety. Its public officials have boasted that what few blue laws exist in Miami are not to be enforced. But the Klan, in its blundering manner, attempts to establish law and order by employing weapons that are their antithesis. The raids on the night clubs of Miami are of a great deal less significance of themselves than the proof they furnish that the Klan has reappeared in Florida as a powerful force. There have been other indications of this, of course; notably the Klan's participation in the murder of Joseph Shoemaker and the trials that followed his death. When we see how completely the Klan is able to dominate Miami, it is no longer possible to believe that it is a minor power in Florida.

News Notes of a Week

In the Far Eastern conflict, Japan pushed on toward Nanking, and most departments of the Chinese government were moved to various places farther west, as Chiang Kai-shek prepared to use harassing, guerilla tactics. Japan demanded the full sovereign rights heretofore enjoyed by China in Shanghai, including the International and French Settlements. . . . The long expected Rebel drive in Aragon was officially postponed on account of wet grounds. Franco insisted and the Loyalists denied that serious political difficulties were weakening the Barcelona government. . . . Viscount Cecil, ardent supporter of the League of Nations, received the Nobel Peace Prize. . . . Viscount Halifax, spokesman for Great Britain, continued his discussions in Germany, which have caused many observers to say that England is swinging away from France and Soviet Russia and toward the Fascist powers. . . . In the United States, the special session of Congress gave ominous signs of yielding to big-business pressure for reduction or repeal of taxes on capital gains and undivided corporate surplus. The old game of guessing whether the President intends to move to the Right or Left continued with fresh zeal. . . . The voice of the cuckoo was heard in the land, appealing to private enterprise to construct vast quantities of housing. . . . The Conference of Mayors met and announced that federal appropriations for relief are not large enough to meet the growing burden. . . . Last week The New Republic was attacked by The New Masses for being isolationist and therefore anti-Soviet. The December issue of The American Mercury appeared on the same day. It attacked The New Republic for doing the work of Moscow. The boys ought to get together.

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National Minima for Labor

THE WAGES-AND-HOURS BILL, one of the most important measures on the agenda of the special session of Congress, which Mr. Harry Weiss discusses in this issue of The New Republic, is apparently satisfactory to few groups, even those who endorse the general principles of such a bill. Neither the A. F. of L. nor the CIO is wholly pleased with it, and of course many employers would be glad to be rid of the whole wages-and-hours proposal.

The logic supporting some bill of this kind is simple. In many instances wages are too low and hours are too long, by any decent standard. Union organization is not universal enough or strong enough to eliminate these disease spots of our economy, which carry a continual threat to the better standards. State laws dealing with the situation cannot be effective in industries where interstate competition prevails. The NRA attempted to solve the problem, but the chief fault in that effort was that at the same time it gave employers the opportunity to raise prices and restrict production through agreements having the force of law, and so encouraged monopolistic practices that interfered with the very object sought—more abundance for the workers. The new bill is an effort to salvage the good aspect of the NRA without the bad.

The principal danger in such legislation is of course that by setting too high standards it will raise labor costs enough actually to decrease employment. The assumption in Mr. Weiss's article, which has long been persuasive to organized labor, that shortening hours necessarily gives more people work, is a dangerous one because it assumes that there is a given total amount of work to be done at any time, which will not be affected by changes in hours and wages. But what happens depends on the situation and on the amount of increase in labor costs that is imposed. During an industrial recession it is perilous to place too heavy a burden on costs. Minimum wages and maximum hours may be, however, a protection against the downward spiraling of depressive forces if they are not set at too high a standard. They are needed during a depression more than at any other time, both to prevent extreme exploitation and to set a bottom somewhere to the fall of wages and prices.

These considerations are arguments either for giving the board a good deal of administrative discretion or for keeping in the bill such maxima as Mr. Weiss deplores. One point here, however, we do regard as of supreme importance. The discretion should not extend far in the direction of varying minimum rates in a given industry according to local conditions. There is no point at all in a national minimum if it is going to permit competition between various sections of the country at the expense of those workers receiving the lowest pay. It may be necessary to have a relatively low minimum, but it should be as nearly uniform as possible within a given competitive industry.

We shall go farther and fare better if we regard the national regulation of wages and hours, not as a measure to jack up the purchasing power of all of labor, or to cure unemployment, but rather as a means of preventing the sweating of workers who are otherwise unprotected. It should supplement the work of unions rather than supplant it. The more ambitious economic objectives can better be sought by other means; true prosperity for labor cannot be brought into existence by simple legislative fiat. Without a method of successfully expanding production and regulating prices, we are likely just to chase our tails by boosting wages and reducing hours.

Section Twelve

READERS of The New York Herald Tribune on Sunday, November 21, discovered an extra forty-page section. Numbered twelve, it was devoted to "Cuba Today: Land of Peace and Progress." The headlines on individual articles give the flavor of the whole: "Colonel Batista's Life Dedicated to Relieving Cubans from Oppression"; "President Laredo Bru Leads Cuba on Democratic Program of Peace and Reconstruction"; "Cuban President Refutes Reports of Dictatorship." A hasty glance would suggest that President Roosevelt, Secretary Hull and other members of the Cabinet had written signed articles for the section, but careful examination shows that nearly all these statements are taken from past speeches or other documents of the individual in question. The general picture of Cuba given is one of a paradise on earth, where justice and happiness walk hand in hand. It is a portrait which everyone informed about the situation in Cuba knows to be fantastically remote from the truth.

Section Twelve casts a curious backward light upon an article by Ludwig Lore, who is a widely known and reputable journalist, in The New York Post five days earlier.

> One of the largest New York newspapers [said Mr. Lore] plans to issue a special supplement to its Sunday edition, showing the rosiest side of conditions in Cuba and thus strengthening sentiment for the Batista dictatorship. While the material will be designated as paid advertisement, it will appear to the casual observer to be part of the regular news section of the paper. Discreet protests by influential people have thus far been of no avail in influencing the newspaper to refuse to print this material.
>
> This neat trick is being financed by Dictator Batista, who happens at the moment to be urgently in need of American good will. A notorious propagandist, who issued a book several years ago glorifying the Trujillo despotism in Santo Domingo, negotiated the deal. Batista paid him with a letter of introduction to the sugar centrales, which means in Cuba an unofficial government demand for money. . . .

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Can it be The Herald Tribune to which Mr. Lore referred? If so, one of his statements is wrong. The material was not labeled "advertising," as required by federal statute when material is paid for. At the foot of each page appeared the statement, "This section written and presented by friends of Cuba." What this enigmatic remark means, we don't pretend to say. Indeed, the more we ponder it, the more bewildered we are by the whole enterprise.

The Program for Agriculture

THERE has been a good deal of uncertainty about the precise nature of the administration's new agricultural program because of the tactics Secretary Wallace has adopted in dealing with Congress and the country in advancing the project. Executive officials have in the recent past been subjected to bitter criticism because they have come to Congress with bills outlined to the last detail, and have asked for prompt passage without substantial alteration, as a necessary part of an emergency program. This was called executive usurpation or even dictatorship. So this time the Department of Agriculture has put the problem up to Congress, merely offering to enlighten the committees with information or suggestions whenever advice is called for.

In general, however, Mr. Wallace's views are known. He wants to create an "ever-normal granary" à la Joseph of the Old Testament, by storing crops when yields are good, and distributing the stores when droughts or other circumstances threaten to create a shortage. This would, he hopes, moderate the swings of prices, protecting the farmer in years of surplus and the consumers in years of scarcity.

He recognizes, too, a danger in this proceeding, exemplified when President Hoover's Federal Farm Board tried it. As long as the government buys crops when there is a surplus, thus helping to maintain prices, there is a likelihood that the farmers will keep on growing too much and therefore that the stored surplus will increase without limit. The government thus may be faced with the alternatives either of extending to the farmers an unending subsidy, or of dumping its holdings in the market and sending prices down too far. The uncertainty caused by large government holdings actually did have an unfortunate effect on crop prices even before the last depression, and of course helped to create disaster when the depression arrived. On this account the Secretary of Agriculture believes that the storing program must rest on the basis of a crop-restriction program, to be applied whenever the granary is "full"—that is, when the carryover reaches a certain size.

What kind of restriction shall be applied? We already have an indirect measure of the sort in the government's soil-conservation activity, which pays farmers for taking land out of cash crops and putting it into grass, timber or soil-building crops. But this is too uncertain in its restrictive effect, and perhaps also too inflexible to serve as the only reliance in the new program. Various other measures are being suggested, resting on the experience with the domestic-allotment plan in wheat or the Bankhead restriction plan in cotton. There is a controversy between those who want voluntary restriction and those who believe compulsory restriction is necessary. And of course there are always those who want subsidies to the farmers without any restriction at all. Discussion concerning what sort of restriction to apply, and what kind of tax shall be used to pay for it, has been occupying a large part of the time of the committees drafting the bill.

Secretary Wallace is, in general, in favor of voluntary restriction—voluntary, that is, in the sense of depending upon a majority vote of the growers most concerned. He is reported to look with approval upon the plan for "marketing quotas." According to this, a national maximum would be set for the total crop to be marketed in the year concerned. This would be broken down by states, counties and finally by individual farms, giving each farmer a quota. If any farmer raised more than his quota, he could put the excess into the "granary"—on the basis of a loan considerably below the current market price. If he sold it on the market, a sales tax high enough to deprive him of the incentive to do so would be applied. Of course he might use it for feed or for his own family.

There are many questions of principle and of detail to be settled about this new program. In outline, it looks fair and reasonable. Whether it is really wise, whether it will work as expected, what kind of tax it will involve, what level of prices should be maintained, whether it can be made constitutional, on what basis the allotment of quotas to individual farmers ought to be made—such matters must be left for future discussion.

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What Kind of Wages-and-Hours Bill?

IT WAS probably just as well that the Black-Connery wages-and-hours bill, as it came from the Senate, did not go through the House of Representatives last session. Even if the bill could have been broken loose from the Rules Committee stranglehold, and brought out to the floor of the House, that body, under the "getting away" frenzy which always seems to grip it after a few blasts of Washington heat, would have jammed the bill through in substantially the Senate form, and proponents of sound wages-and-hours legislation would have found that theirs was a hollow victory.

Not that the Rules Committee's bottling of the bill should be condoned. That action was an arrogant interference with the democratic process. But with this situation obtaining, it was only natural that attention was centered on the attempt to blast the bill out of committee rather than on the bill itself. In this special session, with this legislation a major item on the presidential agenda, with all House leaders committed to active work for its passage, and, as a last resort, with a discharge petition almost certain to receive the necessary 218 signatures, there is little possibility of a successful repeat performance by the Rules Committee. This will enable the spotlight to be focused on the bill itself. And that spotlight will reveal a woefully inadequate and confusing attack on the problems with which the bill purports to deal—so inadequate that it would probably be simpler and easier to make a fresh start.

Everyone is aware of the extremely large volume of unemployment that has accompanied this recovery period. We also know that had not working hours been lengthened since the Schechter decision, a substantial number of the jobless would have been absorbed in private industry, contributing to their own support and relieving the public treasury to that extent. In June of 1937, according to Leon Henderson, of the approximately twelve million workers estimated to be covered by the Black-Connery Bill, six million were working more than forty hours a week. The time has come for the government once more to insist that those who are able and willing to work shall share in the increased production of our economy.

The principal difficulty in setting maximum hours through national legislation is to fix a level effective in absorbing a substantial portion of the idle and, at the same time, to provide sufficient flexibility for the great variety of situations that such legislation must encompass. The National Industrial Recovery Act solved this difficulty by delegating the setting of standards to an administrative body. The legislation of the French People's Front government did so by setting a simple forty-hour standard, leaving the application of the law in particular industries to decrees and administrative regulations. It seems clear that Congress cannot legislate for all industries affecting interstate commerce unless the legislation is so flexible as to be ineffective in helping to absorb the unemployed. Congress can, however, set limits to the range of administrative discretion.

The Black-Connery bill, as it passed the Senate, established a very one-sided limit to administrative discretion. It prohibits the Labor Standards Board from setting hours lower than forty a week, but sets no limit on how high they may be set. Even the standards established need not be adhered to as long as overtime is paid for by time and one-half, though it is true that the Board is given power to limit such overtime. Further to limit the effectiveness of whatever standards are established, the bill provides for exemptions for seasonal or peak activity, thus permitting overtime without any extra pay if the Board so decides. Completely excluded from the operations of any hourly regulations are such congressional favorites as the ginning, compressing and storing of cotton, the canning and processing of fruits and vegetables and the processing of beets, cane and maple into sugar and syrup when such employments are seasonal in character—which is always.

If such are the hourly standards to be enacted by Congress, the unemployed can be sure that they will have to continue to depend upon the meager subsistence, if any, furnished by the government. If Congress really intends to make the legislation effective, it will alter the forty-hour lower limit and permit the Board to fix maximum hours ranging from thirty-five to forty-four per week. While it will probably be necessary to permit highly skilled workers to work longer hours, the Board should be authorized to permit such overtime only upon showing of need for specific classes of workers, and the law should specify that such overtime shall be paid for at a rate of not less than time and one-half.

The organized workers of this country do not need a minimum-wage law for themselves. However, the unorganized workers still receive extremely low wages in some sectors of our economy. As the preamble to the Black-Connery bill points out, rates are frequently as low as $5 a week. These low wage rates are certain to affect the standards prevailing for organized workers and it is to the interest of the latter to see that they are raised. The fixing of minimum wages should also serve, in many cases, to counteract the loss of income resulting from shortened hours of work.

The guiding principle in the establishment of

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minimum wages should not be that of maintaining fair competition. This principle dominated NRA wage setting, and some provisions of the Black-Connery bill stress the same motive. But minimum wages affect only a small portion even of labor costs, and if fair competition is to be the goal, it logically calls for the regulation of wages above the minimum and also of trade practices. The American Federation of Labor's hesitancy in endorsing the Black-Connery bill is based on a healthy fear that it will lead to government wage fixing and its complement, compulsory arbitration.

This fear would not be justified if the principle were clearly established that the sole objective of minimum-wage legislation is to set a rate below which society will not permit human beings to be exploited. So far as possible, this rate should guarantee to all workers a minimum standard of living. The principle suggests the setting of a uniform national wage applying to all industries affected by legislation, with variations only according to differences in the cost of buying the minimum standard. Even variations of this type involve dangers, as witness the multitude of sins committed by the NRA supposedly in support of this principle.

A uniform national minimum would have to be set so low that it would be ineffective in raising standards in many industries. If it were set at a decent level, it might "curtail opportunities for employment," which Congress has indicated it will not permit. Consequently it appears necessary to take into account the relative abilities of the different industries to pay increased wages. Rates must be set for each industry in order that the standards may be as high as is feasible at the present time.

The Senate version of the Black-Connery bill is just as one-sided in limiting discretion in setting minimum wages as it is on maximum hours. It permits the Labor Standards Board to set rates as low as or lower than existing scales but forbids the fixing of more than 40 cents per hour. In setting its standards, the Board is ordered to consider the following factors: (1) cost of living; (2) relative costs of transportation; (3) local economic conditions; (4) value of services rendered; (5) wages established for similar work by collective bargaining; (6) wages paid by employers voluntarily maintaining standards; and (7) differences in unit costs of manufacturing occasioned by varying natural resources, operating conditions and other factors.

Lurking behind several of these phrases is the warning: "Be careful of the wrath of Southern industry." The dominant note is that of equalizing competition. What is any agency to do in the face of these instructions from Congress? Consideration of the last factor alone would involve the Board in endless research and controversy. And supposing unit costs are lower in the North than in the South, does that justify a lower minimum wage for the latter? How much weight is to be given to the various factors? No matter how well intentioned a board, such instructions will result in the NRA method of setting minimum wages—in accordance with the relative economic strength of labor and industry. This means that where labor is weakest and a minimum wage is most needed, the rate established will be lowest.

As if to make certain that no one will be affected by whatever minimum wage results from the bargaining process, the bill provides for numerous exemptions. Such exemptions apply not only to genuine apprentices but also to that unnatural creation of the NRA, the "learner"; they apply to persons whose earning capacity is impaired by "age or physical or mental deficiency or injury"; and they apply wherever "the special character or terms of employment or limited qualifications of employees makes such employment justifiable."

If one is inclined to regard the Black-Connery bill as a step in the right direction, however halting, one should examine two general clauses the ostensible objectives of which are to protect collective bargaining generally and all higher standards, however arrived at. Section 5 (b) provides that minimum wages and maximum hours shall be established in an industry only if the Board finds that a substantial portion of the employees are not covered by collective-bargaining agreements or that facilities for collective bargaining do not exist. If this means anything, it means that no standards may be established for industries like clothing, textiles and shoes, where organized labor has achieved collective-bargaining agreements covering a substantial portion of the industry. Yet it is here that some of the worst forms of exploitation exist and where the collective-bargaining agreements are most menaced by sweatshop standards.

Section 5 (c) also is seemingly benevolent. It provides that a labor-standard order shall not be applicable in any locality where the prevailing minimum wage is higher or the prevailing maximum work week is lower than that established by the Board. If the minimum standard is not to apply, does any standard apply to those concerns which happen not to be maintaining the standards prevailing in the locality? Apparently not. Even if some standards do apply, it means that the Board must, of necessity, examine the prevailing wage-and-hour standards in every locality in the country in order to determine where standards apply and to what extent. One could hardly conceive of a better way to break down the concept of a national minimum wage.

However worthy was the objective of the framers of these two clauses, they make it certain that the legislation will have but limited applicability and that standards will be established on a "locality" basis. No one will quarrel with attempts to protect higher standards, but section 5 (a) already contains a clear and explicit statement that higher standards may be developed through concerted activity of the workers. The best and probably the only guarantee against the lowering of standards is the further organization of labor.

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The original Black-Connery bill gave the Labor Standards Board the power, in addition to setting minimum wages, to establish "fair wages" up to a maximum of $1,200 a year. This provision was deleted largely because of an attack by John L. Lewis, who voiced the point of view that this provision offered an entering wedge to government wage fixing and, in any event, was intruding on the proper field of collective bargaining. Strangely enough, the strongest supporter of the section was Sidney Hillman, who based his view on the experience of the garment unions, which have found it difficult to maintain collective-bargaining agreements because of the intense competition of the non-union shops. Mr. Hillman regards such a provision as helpful to the development of collective bargaining.

There is good ground for fearing the extension of government into the field of wage fixing. If one accepts the principle that it is proper for the government to fix "fair wages," the right of complete wage fixing is conceded. An unsympathetic administration can use this precedent to fix "fair wages" well below existing standards. A much better support to the organized shops would come from some further stimulus to organization of the unorganized workers.

Such a stimulus would be contained in a clause in which Congress stated its belief that wages for workers receiving more than the minimum should be reached through bona-fide collective bargaining. Such a clause was under consideration for some of the NRA codes, but the Labor Advisory Board was afraid that it would lead to the rise of sham collective-bargaining agencies. Effective administration of the National Labor Relations Act should prevent such a development.

The wages-and-hours bill should also provide that where the majority of workers in any industry are governed by collective-bargaining agreements, bidders for government contracts shall be restricted to firms complying with the standards prevailing in such agreements.

It may be that considerable pressure will be exerted toward a bill providing for trade-practice regulations as well as wages-and-hour regulations. A plausible case will be made for such legislation on the theory that industry must be given some compensations for the burdens imposed by labor regulations. Before this pressure is yielded to, however, some of the unfortunate consequences of combining labor and trade-practice regulations under the NRA should be recalled. This combination was the result of a bargain between the administration, which was anxious for voluntary wage-and-hour standards, and industry, anxious to escape the restrictions of anti-trust laws. One result was that the code-making process became a crude bargaining event in which industry traded wage-and-hour concessions for marketing regulations. Industries which wanted little or nothing in the way of legislative control over marketing practices offered little or nothing toward improvement of labor standards. The net result in the field of labor was a crazy-quilt of wages-and-hour regulations unrelated to the needs of particular industries and uncorrelated for competing industries.

The unhappy wedding of labor and trade-practice regulations also gave birth to the concept of self-government in industry. Both labor and trade-practice rules came to be considered means for developing fair competition through the sponsorship of industry groups. If these were primarily regulations of competition entered into voluntarily by industry, it followed that administration should be through industry agencies. The result was the development of code authorities, composed almost exclusively of industry representatives, to whom were granted extensive powers of administration of both labor and trade-practice regulations. Except in highly organized industries, labor was squeezed out of the picture, while the consumer representatives were impotent except for limited powers of criticism. If the NRA experience is at all valuable, it is in pointing to the necessity of a complete separation of labor regulations from any efforts to control trade practices.

It is doubtful that either ex-Senator Black or the late Congressman Connery would be willing to approve the measure at present associated with their names. Newspaper rumors of a new bill to be presented offer encouragement, but no indication is given of the lines of reconstruction. Whether a new start will be along sounder lines depends, to a considerable extent, upon the unity of organized labor on the measure. Achievement of such unity might be the forerunner to success on a broader front.

HARRY WEISS.

The Term

A rumpled sheet
of brown paper
about the length

and apparent bulk
of a man was
rolling with the

wind slowly over
and over in
the street as

a car drove down
upon it and
crushed it to

the ground. Unlike
a man it rose
again rolling

with the wind over
and over to be as
it was before.

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS.

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Collective Insecurity

THE FAILURE of the Brussels Conference, expected and discounted as it was, has nevertheless produced an extremely important decision to be made by the United States. No other country in the world is prepared to take the lead in the effort to stop Japan by the use of force, beginning with economic and financial pressure. Several other countries will follow if the United States gives the final word. The necessity for this decision intrudes itself upon a great debate that has long been in progress in this country as to what our foreign policy shall be: a debate usually posed upon the supposed alternatives of "isolation" or "collective security."

Public discussion of this matter has proceeded under great difficulty and at a level of which no American has any right to be proud. Our thinking about it is conducted under the pressure of many other urgent matters. It is interrupted by the momentary distraction of frivolous and irrelevant but exciting happenings: Kidnapers Break Jail, Sex Fiend Slays Girl, Big Apple Sweeps North, New Auto Without Gear Shift, Held in Love Nest Killing. The natural leaders in such a debate, the President and the Secretary of State, have evaded their obligation; neither of them has ever discussed candidly all or even most of the factors involved. Neither of them has done more than to utter a few emotional platitudes about the folly of war, the desirability of peace and (assumed to be identical with the second) the pleasures to be derived from a large foreign trade. Others who make themselves heard include persons with an axe to grind: notably, American manufacturers of goods who would be helped or injured by a boycott of Japan.

As always happens, most of the discussion consists of the simple calling of names, the sort of appeal to prejudice that Stuart Chase has recently been deploring. If you recommend getting American citizens out of the way of an advancing army, then you are guilty of "scuttle and run." If you feel there is a big enough job for anyone in the task of making America a decent place for Americans to live in, you "seek to build a Chinese wall and hide behind it." And so on. This sort of thing is not argument at all; it is the appeal to emotion, to preëxisting prejudice, which, unhappily, is much more effective than logic in persuading the human animal to act.

Aside from those with a personal interest in pushing the quarrel with Japan, there are two chief groups arguing in favor of collective action. The first of these are the protagonists of the League of Nations, reinforced now by some religious leaders with a special interest in China because of the missionary activities there. No one more well meaning than these worthy gentlemen and ladies—mostly ladies—ever lived. I know them well, and my heart goes out to them. With sweet and simple faith they tell you that just as the policeman keeps order in the neighborhood, so the nations of the world must police themselves through Geneva or its equivalent. They really believe that this analogy is an argument. Every sensible person wishes that what they say were true. Perhaps in a hundred years it will be true. But so far as the present is concerned, it is fantastically, hopelessly false and impossible.

Vocal and influential as this group is, it represents the opinion of less than a third of the American people (if the reports of Dr. George Gallup are as reliable as I believe them to be). They make little impression on Congress, though much more on the State Department, which has always been sensitive to the missionary touch. They carry weight with the President only because his own mind happens to run in the same direction; if he took an opposite view, he would cheerfully throw them out the window.

Another group now advocating collective security is taken more seriously by me, though not by Congress. It is the American Communist movement and its sympathizers. Carrying to its logical conclusion the complete reversal of Communist policy of the past few years, they are now arguing that fascism is a worldwide menace to democracy, that it can only be checked by force, and that the democratic powers must stand shoulder to shoulder in a firm united front. If these powers will only do this, the thesis runs, it is almost certain that the Fascists will be outbluffed and will give way.

This is an impressive argument that must not be lightly put aside. If I believed that the analysis had any reality behind it, or that the action suggested had any reasonable chance of succeeding, I should probably endorse this plea. My reasons for being skeptical I shall set forth in a moment; but first, I must record the opinion that this advice to America is not framed in American terms or the American interest. It grows out of the present situation of the government of Soviet Russia and constitutes a formula, not for the advance of revolution throughout the world but for the preservation of the Soviet Union, which fully expects to be attacked in the fairly near future by Japan or Germany, or both. Obviously, it is to Russia's advantage to make as many allies as possible. If I were a Russian, I am sure that I should take the same attitude and work for it with all my might. But since I am not a Russian, I have to recognize three possibilities: first, that the Russians may be wrong in saying that democracy and fascism are now face to face at Armageddon; second, that the Russian government

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may be poorly advised about the temper of the American people and their probable course of action; third, that what is best for the future of Soviet Russia may not be best for the future of America, or for that matter, of civilization as a whole. I believe it would be a disaster of the first magnitude if the Russian experiment were to be destroyed; but a war between the so-called democracies and the fascist powers would, in my judgment, destroy the Soviet experiment and the degree of democracy that still exists throughout the world.

John Maynard Keynes, in a famous passage in "The Economic Consequences of the Peace," spoke of the difficulty experienced by the British, French and Italian representatives at the Paris Conference in "debamboozling" President Wilson—in persuading him that the idealistic "Allied aims" were just propaganda, and that peace must now be made on the grim and filthy basis of the secret treaties. I sympathize a little with Mr. Wilson's predicament. I find it hard to forget what the Communists told me so often and with such angry condescension only a few years back.

They then said that the democracy of the capitalist countries such as England and France was only an illusion, a device to blind the workers to their unhappy lot while still keeping them down. Soviet Russia remembered that these two powers, only seventeen years ago, had spent vast sums of money equipping, and participating in, a military invasion of Russian territory for the purpose of overthrowing the government headed by Lenin. The Communists pointed indignantly to the imperialistic rule of the British in India, in Egypt and elsewhere, to the horrors of life in French Indo-China, to the misdeeds of the United States in the Caribbean area and the Philippines. In those days, Communists everywhere would have welcomed gleefully the news that Italy, by means of ships and airplanes in the Mediterranean, was threatening England's line of communication with "her subjugated millions in the Orient." They would not have been averse to the news that England, France or the United States was going to war against Italy or Germany or Japan, but their interest would have been in the possibility that proletarian revolution in these countries would thereby be brought nearer. Today they would, I am sure, regard proletarian revolution in France, England or the United States at this moment as a disaster, since it would for several years, at least, reduce the military effectiveness of the country and thus expose Russia to an increased peril of invasion from East or West.

The motives which lie behind the advice offered to America are, however, far less important than whether the advice is good. What are the facts? In the debate the United States is now carrying on, most of those who join act as though there were only two alternatives: complete development of a self-contained economy or complete participation in the efforts to force Japan to a halt, even if those efforts include going to war. But this is not true. We do not have to give up coffee and rubber automobile tires or else send a million young Americans to fight in Asia. There are many possible choices to be found between these grim alternatives.

I, for one, see no reason for objecting to the expression of moral disapprobation of Japan's action by the League of Nations or by the Brussels Conference. I see no reason for objection to private boycotts of Japanese goods by individuals or societies. I am heartily in favor of immediate application of the American Neutrality Act, which, in the opinion of some experts familiar with the Far East, would adversely affect Japan far more than it would China. But those who are talking about "collective security" are not satisfied with such measures as these. They want, at the very least, the application of "sanctions" against Japan, and at the most, American participation in war if the Japanese force that issue. I am opposed to these measures, for five reasons:

1. I feel there is an excellent chance that the application of sanctions (which mean economic and financial embargoes and blockades) would lead to war and war in turn would destroy our democracy.

2. I see no reason to believe that the Japanese would yield in the face of such action. Italy did not do so. Germany did not do so during the Great War, until her military strength had been broken in the field at a cost of eleven million lives. On the contrary, sanctions stiffen the national will to sacrifice in the (supposed) national interest.

3. I have grave doubt that any of the powers that might participate in such a blockade would carry it through to the end. Great Britain has already sacrificed Loyalist Spain on the altar of expediency. She is now obviously wooing Germany and Italy. There have been repeated rumors of her attempting to strike a bargain with Japan somewhat similar to the Hoare-Laval scheme for Ethiopia.

France has today a Left government generally sympathetic to Soviet Russia, although less so than in the recent past. But the Right Opposition in France is extremely strong and active. It might conceivably come to power within the next few months, legally or otherwise. It would be a tragic error to make long-time plans based upon French support.

The Soviet Union is seeking allies only because she believes Japan and Germany intend to attack her. If these two powers gave her firm assurance to the contrary, she would certainly stay at home and mind her own business, the USSR being the least aggressive, most genuinely pacifist great country in the world today. She, likewise, is not prepared to continue, or to risk, a war on behalf of the principle of collective security in the abstract without reference to her own immediate welfare.

Finally, there is no guarantee that even the United States would persevere in the policy of enforcing peace by boycott. At least two-thirds of our people want the greatest possible degree of isolation both from Europe and the Orient. A boycott of Japan would mean financial loss and even severe suffering to a good many thousands of Americans, workers in silk mills, retail merchants, cotton

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planters and sharecroppers. Next autumn we shall elect the entire House of Representatives and one-third of the Senate. It is not hard to imagine an election in which successful candidates were pledged to drop the whole "collective-security" effort.

4. The argument that we shall inevitably be dragged into the next great war, and therefore might as well "take our place now among the nations," is fallacious. A fairly slight swing of the balance might have kept us out of the Great War —perhaps even so slight a matter as general public knowledge of the contents of the Allies' secret treaties might have served. Private capitalism in the long run certainly tends toward war, but with foreknowledge and the will to peace, that tendency can be checkmated at individual times and under individual conditions.

5. What we are asked to do is to engage in a bluffing game with the Fascist powers. We are asked to threaten a war that we don't want and don't intend to begin, in order to frighten them out of their line of conduct. But the Fascists can always outbluff the democracies, first because they really are willing to fight and second because they suppress their dissenters and present but one voice to the opposing side. If we are not prepared to fight, we should not pretend that we are. Any half-hearted attempt at coercion is worse than none.

We are told that fascism is now spreading over the world and that we must dam its tide. But this is the same argument by analogy that falsely terrorized conservatives fifteen years ago in regard to the threat of a world communist revolution, spreading from Russia. The argument presupposes that a philosophy spreads by contagion like bubonic plague. Actually, it does not; a revolution in any country proceeds from internal factors and along characteristic national lines. Outside aid, in the form of propaganda, the sending of agitators, etc., can slightly help an existing movement; but it cannot bring such a movement into being. We already have some degree of fascism in America; if we get more, it will be because of things already existing here, and not because the "have-not" powers in other parts of the world are making inroads upon the "haves." It is a sickening spectacle to see what Italy did in Ethiopia and Japan is now doing in China. It would be a more sickening spectacle to see the civilized nations of the world destroy their civilization in a vain attempt to fight brutality with brutality.

When Soviet Russia abandoned the effort at world revolution, she decided to concentrate her efforts on such a success in a socialized economy that the world, impressed by the object lesson, would be moved to follow her example. If we really want democracy to survive and to triumph over fascism, we might well begin by making it work at home, in every one of the great powers that are listed as democracies today. For it shares the famous qualification once given to Christianity: it has never been tried. BRUCE BLIVEN.

Dictatorship in Brazil[1]

IS BRAZIL headed for fascism? Several factors of importance point in that direction. There are the growing strength of the Integralists, the Brazilian fascists; the universal economic misery; and the campaign against communism.

Plinio Salgado is the leader of the Partido Integralista. He organized the party in the fall of 1932. Prior to that time he was known as a man of letters. Salgado delved into Brazilian history to find a slogan, Fatherland, Family and God. His program is reactionary, and his campaigning is violent. He condemns the liberal state, upholds the idea of dictatorship, intends to establish an educational monopoly which will be in the hands of the Catholic Church, and vociferously condemns everything that he calls communism and socialism. He particularly stresses the "national" character of his movement. Recently it was pretty well proved that he is financing his party with the aid of German money. A bond issue floated by the party is to be honored when the party takes over the state. The bonds, it was discovered, were being discounted at a German bank.

Hitler, Mussolini, Count de la Rocque, Franco and the Japanese military are the heroes of the Integralists. The newspapers of the Integralists strongly oppose the Chinese, Russia, the French Popular Front, Roosevelt and the Spanish government. The party members wear a green shirt (green is the basic color in the Brazilian flag), salute like the Nazis and ride roughshod over their opponents. They are armed, although the extent of their arms is not known. Two of their recent exploits include taking over a town in a "test mobilization" and the killing of some sixteen people (dozens more were wounded) in the industrial town of Campos. Their mentality is that of the ruling classes of Brazil; there is nothing in their program to offend property or religion, the two great forces; and they are organized on a national basis. This latter point is important. In the past Brazil has had no national parties, only state and local groupings which traded their support to any candidate who paid well. The Integralists, however, have centers in every city, town and hamlet of Brazil; they have money to carry on a swashbuckling, nationwide campaign; and they seem to be growing in strength.

Hunger is the appalling factor in the Brazilian situation. From the pot-bellied *Caboclos* of the Amazon to the sleek-looking señoritas who sell high-priced merchandise in Rio's elegant stores, all are hungry. That is, subtracting 10 percent of the population. A day laborer may earn as much as 10 milreis a day (about 65 cents), when he works. But he will not work every day, and his wage is more likely to be five or six milreis. In the hinterland back of Rio the standard wage is three mil-

[1] This article was written a few days before the new Vargas dictatorship was set up.—THE EDITORS.

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reis daily. In the north of Brazil wages are about the same. A man whose position is equivalent to that of an assistant professor in the States teaches Portuguese every night for an hour and a half for 150 milreis a month. But it is bolshevism to mention such things. Getulio Vargas recently came out with a statement that is now posted in every public place in Brazil, saying that there is no social condition in Brazil that warrants any thought of a movement for social betterment.

This brings us to anti-communism. Some days ago a deputy from the state of Bahia said, "There is no communism in Brazil, but there is a tremendous amount of anti-communism." That is exactly the situation as I see it. I have not been able to discover that Brazil has any organized communism. If economic misery and communism were synonymous, then yes, Brazil would have a powerful communist party. They are not the same, but in Brazil they are regarded as the same. Thus arises the anti-communist movement. All the miserable and underfed are regarded as potential communists, and all who sympathize with the miserable and underfed are *treated* as communists. In this movement many elements may join. The Church, the property owners, most of the newspapers, the conservative political parties, the so-called liberal parties. The Integralists are the loudest anti-communists, but the Church also attacks communism almost daily.

The schools are to be "cleansed" of all suspected teachers; and a commission has been appointed to eliminate all "communist" books from the curriculum and the libraries. Labor unions, largely the creation of Vargas, are belaboring communism in their newspapers. A number of arrests have been made, but it is not necessary in Brazil to resort to the brutal methods employed in some other countries. The appalling truth is that so effective have been the methods of the past, so powerful the influence of the Church, that Brazil has been robbed of the power of analysis. Brazil accepts! There is only one possibility of a change in this situation. If there is anything in the idea of the thesis and the anti-thesis, all of this anti-communism may produce communism.

Rio de Janeiro. FREDERICK P. ATWATER.

Witch-Hunting in Massachusetts

WITCH-HUNTING has always been a favorite outdoor and indoor sport in Massachusetts. Witches, Quakers, Tories, Jeffersonians, Abolitionists, Dr. Muck, Sacco and Vanzetti all testify to the godly and patriotic fervor with which it has been pursued. It is accordingly not surprising to find the popular game being played at the statehouse in Boston in the fall of 1937, before an appreciative but, it must be added, not an entirely approving audience.

The Commission on Communism and Other Subversive Activities and Propaganda was initiated by a Jewish member of the Legislature, for the purpose, currently and plausibly assigned, of proving that there are no Jews in the Communist Party. The Commission consists of nine members, three Senators, three representatives and three appointees of the Governor. The chairman is Senator Sybil Holmes. Most of the early sessions were devoted to the Communists. Comrade Browder appeared and made a not unfavorable impression. Then Comrade Philip Frankfeld, secretary of the Communist Party of Massachusetts, took up the tale, followed by his colleagues. The Communists have an initial difficulty in such appearances because of their unfaith in God, a lapse which according to Senator Burke, who represents the Vatican on the Commission, affects their veracity, or at least their credibility. A good deal of time was consumed in getting over this hurdle. It has often occurred to me that the Communists might engage Mr. Lamont (I mean Corliss) to formulate for them, under proper specifications, a sort of synthetic deity for the purpose of an oath.

A second subject of question, over which some time was wasted, was whether a Communist would fight against the Soviet Union when it declares war against the United States—a question as embarrassing and irrelevant as to ask a Catholic whether he would fight the Pope when in his newly acquired temporal power the Holy Father becomes belligerent.

A third line of attack was the persistent demand for the names of members of the Party and of the Young Communist League. The officers explained that their reason for withholding such names was the certainty that in the existing temper of public opinion in Massachusetts workers would be thrown out of their jobs and students expelled from their colleges. They might have added that the Australian ballot carries the implication of secrecy as a political right. The Commission persisted in regarding this refusal to give the names as "lack of coöperation." The threat of holding Comrade Frankfeld and his colleagues guilty of contempt and sending them to jail is possibly not an idle one.

The passion for names led to the reading of long lists for possible identification as Communists. It was amusing to hear the well known Boston liberals brought into question, Mrs. Gertrude Winslow, Dean Clarence Skinner. "Is he a Communist?" was asked in regard to Dr. Harry F. Ward, and Lincoln Steffens. This concentration upon communism in the early days of the hearings led to a public letter signed by a number of Boston liberals, including

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the Reverend Samuel A. Eliot and Professor Kirtley F. Mather, calling attention to the fact that there are other "subversive tendencies" in the commonwealth. Accordingly Mr. Orville S. Poland of the Civil Liberties Union was allowed to present Mr. John Spivak, who gave a comprehensive account of the avowed fascist and vigilante organizations in this country of the Ku Klux Klan and Silver Shirt type. He indicated the tendency of the managers of these groups to snuggle up to the Nazis, who, according to Mr. Spivak, have had $2,500,000 to spend. One organization in Boston, the Industrial Defense Association, was represented before the Commission by its chief, Edward H. Hunter. He denied the Nazi tie-up, but admitted the authorship and circulation of anti-Semitic pamphlets, "Swan Song of Hate," "Jewish Jazz—Tin Pan Alley," "Shylocks in Banking," and others calling attention to the Jews prominent in the Roosevelt administration. Mr. Spivak demurred at giving the names of contributors to Mr. Hunter's organization and Mr. Hunter flatly refused.

As I sat a spectator at the hearings, the scene suggested my own Roxbury school, with the Honorable Sybil Holmes as mistress in the center and a group of pupils, not all well behaved, on either side. There was always in my school days a wild Irish boy, who feared not God or principal. It was always a dramatic moment in the drab school day when he and the teacher transferred the educational process to the dressing-room. Miss Holmes is a progressive pedagogue with a gavel instead of a rattan, and bangs the desk instead of the pupils' heads. The bad boy of the Commission is undoubtedly Senator Thomas Burke. His district includes two Jewish wards, so that he is interested in the defense both of the Synagogue and the Church. He rode Mr. Hunter and Comrade Frankfeld with equal violence. He denounced the former as conducting "a despicable racket." He refused to accept the latter's explanation of a change in orientation of the Communist Party in respect to democracy. "You don't think you can get away with framing a phony constitution three days before this hearing opened, do you? Do you think the members of this commission are saps enough—"

Gavel.

Senator Burke waxed merry over the small number of Frankfeld's converts. "You have only 1,205 members in Massachusetts and you have been organized here since 1919?"

"Yes."

"Are you proud of the record?"

"No; I am afraid it is a very poor record."

"Well, I think that's the worst record I ever heard of. You don't function very well, do you?"

"Yes, we function well," replied Frankfeld darkly.

Senator Burke read to Frankfeld for identification a series of highly inflammatory pronouncements from a document which he refused to identify. In spite of Chairman Holmes's repeated caution that this proceeding was out of order, he continued. Finally she declared a recess of five minutes. I expected to hear the ominous words: "Master Burke will come with me to the dressing-room," but Miss Holmes is a progressive teacher. She went to Tommy Burke's seat, sat down friendly beside him, and cajoled him into good humor. When the hearing was resumed Senator Burke still had the floor but the teacher had apparently confiscated the illicit reading matter.

There is one notable difference between the present witch hunt and its predecessors. The original witchcraft excitement has come down to us in the stately English of Chief Justice Sewell and Cotton Mather. Even Sacco and Vanzetti were done to death with the impeccable style and courtly manners of President Lowell and Judge Grant. In the present commission any old Bostonian must see a sad falling off in the culture on which his city prides itself. A revealing instance occurred when the author of the Commission broke into the examination of Earl Browder with an inquiry as to the Boogwazzies. Comrade Browder was puzzled, but the questioner insisted that they appeared on every page of his writings with sinister significance. Slowly a light dawned and broadened in the audience, and amid decorous laughter the chairman explained: "He means bourgeoisie." Another notable break was when Senator Burke accused a witness of wishing "to liquefy the church." As the only church recognized in Boston is Cardinal O'Connell's, the expression was of an irony which the distinguished prelate will appreciate. Another witness fell under the stigma of "not talking English good"; one who confessed to having committed that cardinal schoolboy's sin of quoting without giving credit was denounced as "a paganist," and a third, who cited a document without a name, was advised to use the term "unanimous." All this would have given pain to the late George Apley.

Is Massachusetts really afraid of the Communists? When one remembers how she trembled from Cape Ann to Buzzard's Bay at the menace of Cervera's fleet in the Spanish war, or how she saw submarines off Cape Cod and an emplacement for a mortar in Dr. Muck's tennis court in the war with Germany, one has to admit the possibility. But obviously the animus is political, with fear as a background. There was politics in the witchcraft delusion and in the persecution of radicals from Ann Hutchinson and Roger Williams to Sacco and Vanzetti. What gives a sinister significance to the present comedy is the resurgence of clericalism. Bunyan saw Giant Pope as quite impotent, only able to gnaw his fingers and curse the Pilgrims as they passed. Today he is on his feet again, seeking the old alliance with the civil power, seeing communism as a red rag to arouse the spirit of nationalism, which is a mixture of fear and hate. If Massachusetts can learn the lesson so clearly taught in Mistress Holmes's classes, she will not count $3,000 as a high tuition fee.

ROBERT MORSS LOVETT.

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Shoot the Works

"Sweet Dog-Face"—A Short Story

IF YOU'VE signed him to put on the dances, you've signed him," said Sam Hess, "but you should have come to me first. I could have saved you a lot of grief."

"You mean he drinks?"

"Not a drop and he doesn't make passes at the girls and he knows more about tap dancing than any man in America, but it's seven years since anybody hired him to put on a show."

"Well, what's the trouble then?"

"You've come to the right party. I gave him his last job. I hired him to put on the dances in a book show I had called 'Some Fun.' We were rehearsing in Bryant Hall for an opening in Atlantic City. People say I'm a tough guy around rehearsals. Maybe I am, but I can't stand downright brutality. I hate men who haven't got any human feelings. There is such a thing as flesh and blood. Even the chorus girls aren't machines."

"Jack Bell doesn't look so tough," I objected.

"Maybe he isn't outside the theatre, but I'm telling you. The first couple of weeks of 'Some Fun' he wasn't so bad. Just sort of jumpy. But on a Monday morning he came in for rehearsal and right from the gun he started to bawl the girls out. He called them every name he could lay his tongue to just because they couldn't get some new step he was trying to teach them. I came in just before they walked off the stage. I heard him screaming at them. The girls said they wouldn't stand for language like that. I couldn't blame them. I told him he was through and naturally the story got out and he's never put on a show since."

"How does he get along?"

"Not so hot, naturally. He does a little private teaching and an occasional vaudeville date. But he isn't much of a success as a single. He dances just with his feet and it's perfect. That's much too good for the fish. He and his partner Lucy Wagner used to be very successful. Wagner and Bell was a great act. They were booked solid for seasons. I think she was his wife, but she's dropped out. Maybe they had some trouble. Nobody seems to know what became of her."

It was stifling all through our rehearsals and Jack was jumpy, but the worst rebuke he ever shouted at any of our girls was, "Sweetheart, you're lousy." I stuck close to him and when he seemed to be getting out on a wire I'd call a halt and take him across the street and buy him a bottle of milk while I had a scotch and soda. He told me he was determined to have the show ready to open on the date set because he couldn't sleep until we got the curtain up.

We did open on time and on the hottest September seventh in the history of the Weather Bureau. Jack and I stood in the wings together and just before the curtain fell on the first act I began to feel faint. I told Bell and he said, "I feel the same way. Let's each of us put up five dollars and the fellow that dies first gets the money."

"I've got a better idea," I answered. "Let's skip the last five minutes and go across the alley to the Green Door."

We found a table way back in a corner and I ordered a bottle of milk and a scotch and soda.

"Do you often get feeling like you was about to die?" he asked.

"When I'm under a strain like this first night."

"I had it real bad once," said Jack Bell. He looked all around to see if anybody could hear him. "It was the night after I took my wife to the asylum."

"I didn't know. I'm so sorry."

"It was a long time ago. Nobody knows. It was just seven years ago. Maybe that's why I felt funny over there in the theatre. Maybe it would do me good to talk about it. I've got to tell somebody sometime. Maybe you'll understand.

"You see the Doc had been telling me for months that it had to be done. It was tough. You see we'd played vaudeville for fifteen years. Wagner and Bell—what an act! Lucy Wagner, that was my wife. She could dance almost as well as I can and she was a comic. She was always sort of like a kid but it got kind of unnatural. The Doc gave it a name and he said there wasn't any hope and I must send her to the asylum. He said she might jump out of the window. I didn't want to send her away after we'd been a team for so long. She didn't get any better. She wouldn't read Variety or play pinochle any more. I used to just sit and watch her. And when she got crying I'd promise to take her to Coney Island. You see when we were in vaudeville she was always wanting to go to Coney Island on a Sunday afternoon and ride on the scenic railway. But we never got to go. We were booked solid in those days and we played four shows on Sunday. The Doc kept telling me I've got to take her to the institution. I told him she wouldn't go. 'I can send over an ambulance and a couple of men and we can strap her down,' he said. I didn't want that. My God, how she could tap. Just like a man.

"Finally he says, 'If you don't bring her I'm coming over to fetch her. She's my patient. I can't take the responsibility if anything happens to her.'

" 'I'll bring her,' I told him.

"She seemed to know something was wrong and she was crying terrible. I tried to cheer her up. 'I've got a new step,' I said, and I showed it to her. In the old days of Wagner and Bell she'd have it in five minutes. Now she didn't pay any attention. I guess she knew there'd never be Wagner and Bell again any more.

" 'All right, Sweet Dog-Face,' I said, you know that was kind of a pet name I had for her, 'all right, kid,' I said, 'it's Sunday and we're going down to Coney Island and you can ride on the scenic railway all day.' She laughed then and I took her to the place where the Doc had told me. It was a big place. I didn't go in. I got a room in a hotel. I couldn't sleep. I tried the new step very light till I was tired, but in the middle of the night I woke up and I felt like I could hardly breathe. Early in the morning the Doc came over. He said, 'Jack, you're not going to die. There's nothing wrong with your heart. You're upset about Lucy. You forget about Lucy and Wagner and Bell. Go and lay in your bed for a week. You'll be all right. Just lay there.' "

"And how long did you rest up, Jack?" I asked.

"I couldn't lay there at all. As soon as the Doc left I put on my pants and went out. He didn't know. I had to be at Bryant Hall at ten o'clock to teach the step to a lot of clucks in the chorus of a new show called 'Some Fun.' "

HEYWOOD BROUN.

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Washington Notes

A Tough Congress—Uncle Barney Comes Home to Politics—Any Stick to Beat the New Deal

DURING the past year, this department has regretfully commented on what it considered to be mistakes in Mr. Roosevelt's strategy. It has pointed out that he was creating a deep division between himself and the Democratic leadership in Congress, that he was neglecting to fortify himself by building up an independent, loyal following of his own, and that he thus risked finding himself ultimately isolated and helpless. As its readers have perhaps discovered, this department is definitely on the Pollyanna side and is the bearer of evil tidings only with acute reluctance. But the plain fact is that the behavior of the special session of Congress has confirmed the worst of these forebodings. The goon squad—the name given by CIO organizers on the West Coast to the hired bravos of their opponents—is roaming the corridors of the Capitol, and the outlook for the New Deal is anything but healthy.

For the moment at least, the White House advisers appear to be in a desperate frame of mind. Here are some of the things that disturb them:

1. The current stock-market panic has greatly upset the rank-and-file members of Congress. It has shaken their former confidence that Mr. Roosevelt was synonymous with happy days being here again, and has played directly into the hands of the old-line Democrats. Temporarily, control of the Senate seems to have passed to the Democratic conservatives, of whom the most active are Messrs. Garner, Harrison and Byrnes. "Dear Alben" Barkley, Mr. Roosevelt's choice for majority leader, has made a lamentable start. In the House, there is a greater disposition to remain faithful to the New Deal, but here, too, Mr. Roosevelt's authority is uncertain.

2. The conservatives have specifically challenged Mr. Roosevelt to fight on the issue of the repeal, or at least the drastic modification, of the undistributed-profits tax. This issue will perhaps not come to a head until the regular session opens in January, but if Mr. Roosevelt undertakes to oppose repeal or modification, the conservatives will probably beat him by good-sized majorities in both Senate and House. If he attempts to compromise by agreeing to the exemption of corporations earning less than $50,000 a year, they may beat him. If he is successful in saving the bare principle of the undistributed-profits tax, he will be lucky.

3. The stock-market panic has produced a high degree of tension within the Cabinet, which has become almost as difficult to manage as Congress itself. Secretary Wallace is openly in favor of modifying the undistributed-profits tax, and is believed to desire a new "friendliness" toward business. Surprisingly enough, Secretary Perkins appears to be taking a similar line. Mr. Morgenthau has doglike devotion for the President, but it is reported that his nerve was badly shaken by an episode that occurred during his speech before the American Academy of Political Science three weeks ago. He proudly asserted that the credit of the government was unimpaired, and, to his grief and bewilderment, he was greeted with audible derision. Of Mr. Roosevelt's chief aides, Mr. Harry L. Hopkins is the only one who seems ready to proceed with the New Deal program without apologies or compromise.

4. There are signs that a definite conspiracy exists among conservative Democrats to capture control of the Democratic Party machinery before 1940. White House advisers are especially worried by the apparent return of Mr. Bernard M. Baruch to active politics. He is supposed to have had an important part in the recent senatorial election in Arkansas. Supporters of Governor Carl E. Bailey, the New Deal candidate, swear that Mr. Bailey would have won easily if it had not been for the intervention of Mr. Baruch and Mr. Harvey C. Couch, head of the Arkansas Light and Power Company. It is certain that Mr. Baruch has acted as a close adviser of Senator Harrison in the latter's effort to bring about the repeal of the undistributed-profits tax. "Uncle Barney" was one of the most respected and influential figures of the old Democratic Party—the party that nominated James M. Cox, John W. Davis and Al Smith. He has relationships running back twenty years with the business leaders who were accustomed to shape the Party's policy and supply its funds. Probably there is no one who could more quickly and effectively unite the conservative elements of the Party against Mr. Roosevelt.

Mr. Roosevelt's message at the opening of last week's special session alarmed many liberals, who feared that its mild, half-hearted tone foreshadowed a fresh attempt on Mr. Roosevelt's part to move to the right and reach an understanding with business. This interpretation is almost certainly unjust to Mr. Roosevelt. The tone merely reflected the dark discouragement that now enshrouds the White House. Put crudely, last week's message was a stall.

The left-wing group in the House, now busily engaged in deciding their own future course of action, hope that Mr. Roosevelt will refuse to give in on the undistributed-profits-tax issue, or on any other demand of business. Their reasons are worth recording. They believe that business does not want to reach an understanding with the administration, and that the current outcry against the undistributed-profits tax is in part insincere. There are many corporations—the great American Telephone and Telegraph Company, to cite a shining example—that have consistently distributed the full amount of their earnings for many years past. Wall Street traders, as a group, are heartily in favor of a high dividend rate. So, as a group, are investment bankers. The reason that business and finance are now united in opposing the tax is not because all business men and financiers disapprove of it, but because it promises to be a handy stick with which to beat Mr. Roosevelt. As a result of the stock-market panic, they think that their chance has come to paint Mr. Roosevelt and the New Dealers as crackpot experimenters, and the undistributed-profits tax, which to the mass of voters is a black mystery, offers a likely place to begin.

The left-wing Congressmen admit there is a certain amount of genuine discontent with the undistributed-profits tax. But they deny that if Mr. Roosevelt consents to its repeal or modification, he will thereby bring about capital investment and business "confidence." Once he yields on the undistributed-profits tax, business spokesmen will concentrate on the repeal of the capital-gains tax. And if

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he yields again, they will press for amendments to the National Labor Relations Act and for a modification of the SEC. Privately the left-wingers agree that the undistributed-profits tax is a difficult issue on which to do battle, but they hope that the administration will at least fight a stiff rearguard action.

Washington. T. R. B.

Other People's Money

The More the Scene Changes, etc.—Setting the Stage for Some New Miracle Men—A Bronx Cheer for the Expert

THE MAN who took his seat to look at the great national newsreel comedy which began in October, 1929, might very well at this moment grab his hat and start away from his seat saying: "This is where I came in."

Heigh-ho! November, 1929-November, 1937!

On November 7, 1929, a policeman found a parrot lost at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Eighty-first Street, dolefully screaming, "More margins! More margins!" Some Wall Street parrot astray from that melancholy neighborhood, repeating what he had picked up in the Street, might now well be found crying, "Less margins! Less margins!"

Congress was in special session then. And just as our profound business captains are now blaming the government in Washington for the rising disaster, so then—on November 23—Mr. Fred I. Kent, of the Bankers' Trust Company, was telling a congressional committee that the depression had been brought on by the dawdling of Congress with the tariff bill.

And ah! distinctly do I remember, it was in that bleak November, the Great Engineer had summoned the business leaders to Washington, just as Mr. Roosevelt did eight years later. And what do you suppose the "captains" were doing? On November 21, twelve railroad presidents were pledging the great boom-smasher that they "would maintain full employment and business progress by proceeding with the maximum program of new construction and betterment."

The next day the "leaders" of the building industry, whoever they are, met with the Secretary of Commerce to stimulate the building industry, which was then suffering from a slight heart attack but which has since become a chronic invalid. And the day after that the President appealed to the states to line up with the federal government and private industry "to carry on prudent construction and expansion programs." Then the government slowed down its building.

Then on November 25, the farmers arrived at the White House. I will give you one guess as to the sovereign remedy they brought along. Yes, you are right—easy money. That would settle the matter swiftly.

There was the propaganda to "let business alone." There was the cry for tax reduction. There were the reassuring statements. There were the perplexed President and the business men who knew it all. Which recalls a tale told me by one great business man who has a sense of humor. In 1929 he was summoned to the White House and asked what to do. He told the President glibly what to do. It agreed with the Great Engineer's ideas. A year later he was summoned again. Again he outlined his cures. Then late in 1931 he was called once more to the White House to prescribe again. This time he said: "Well, Mr. President, I am sure you have learned a great deal during the depression. But I am surprised that you haven't yet found out that I don't know anything about it."

There are, of course, some things missing from this stage business and some persons from the cast. Mr. Wiggin and Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Insull and Mr. Mellon and Mr. Julius Barnes and various other diagnosticians and practitioners have disappeared. The gentlemen who walked boldly into the Exchange and cried out high pegging bids—Mr. Richard Whitney who held back the sea by bidding 200 for U. S. Steel, old John D. Rockefeller, who announced that he was picking up good stocks—they are not around. The shorts—Mr. Percy Rockefeller, Mr. Matthew Brush, Mr. Jesse Livermore, Mr. Ben Smith, Mr. George Breen—they are not about. The banks are not bursting in air—because now they are guaranteed by the government.

But now it is about time for the miracle men to appear again. Surely we have not forgotten the crop that arose after Mr. Hoover's slump. Father Coughlin, Huey Long, Milo Reno the farm-holiday man, Dr. Townsend, Dr. Warren, Howard Scott the Technocrat—recovery did its deadly work on them. But now we may look for a new crop. I put spending the gold profit near the top of the list for popular cures the coming year. I think the big armament supporters will come forward, led by the President, in the name of sweet peace and prosperity—if he thinks it is popular. There is of course no imagining what new devices will be offered us to "end poverty" and produce "abundance." But I strongly suspect that the "sound thinkers" are about to have their day again—the "constructive" men, the practical minds of business. I fear that the people are about to forget all about the comprehensive mess they made of things on their last trip. All this will be obscured by the mess made by their successors. It is too bad. Those two golden years—1933 and 1934—they were a gift from the gods, a priceless moment in history when it might have been possible to do something. They were thrown away for the monumental folly of the NRA, the AAA, the gold-purchase plan and the RFC, the Guffey Act and a mess of sales taxes and a twenty-billion-dollar deficit.

Perhaps you have wondered what kind of materials are found in the minds upon which the promoters feed. I wrote a piece in this column which appeared in the issue on the newsstands October 28. I observed that Radio stock had in a certain period ranged in price from $2.50 to $420 a share, but that those who bought had never been paid a penny dividend and no one can say when they ever will. The drift of the piece was that a stock which in nearly twenty years had never paid a cent in yield to its owners—many of whom had paid high prices for it—was not worth anything as an investment. The mail brings a clipping from this column and pinned to it another from a newspaper announcing a week after my piece appeared that the Radio Corporation had declared a *dividend of 20 cents*. And on the clipping was this triumphant scrawl: "Oh, these wise experts! Wise guys, what? Ha, ha! Ho, ho!" It is of such stuff the mind of the eternal sucker is made.

JOHN T. FLYNN.

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Three Stage Versions

Julius Caesar. Mercury Theatre, November 11, 1937.
Madame Bovary. Adapted by Benn W. Levy from Gaston Baty's dramatization of Flaubert's novel. Broadhurst Theatre, November 16, 1937.
Father Malachy's Miracle. Adapted by Brian Doherty from the novel by Bruce Marshall. St. James Theatre, November 17, 1937.

MR. ORSON WELLES made so marked an impression last season with his contributions to the Federal Theatre venture, the "Dr. Faustus" especially, that his entrance into the new and independent enterprise at the Mercury is a real theatre event. The first of an excellent list of productions promised is a version of Shakespeare's play of "Julius Caesar." The production is in modern clothes, with no stage mounting beyond what is done with lighting and with a platform across the stage, raised three steps above it and dropping off again at the rear. The play itself has been very drastically cut, and in spots added to, with the intention, it appears, of increasing its modern application and of making it a dictator play—it is, in fact, carried so far as giving Julius Caesar an unmistakable resemblance to Mussolini.

The production throughout is characterized by a certain boldness in outline and a certain freshness in effect, through which Shakespeare's meanings are often freed and vividly projected. The effort, as regards the acting, is constantly toward naturalism—in the case of some of the actors it is even against the artifice of the verse medium itself. A refreshing element of energy is achieved. There is a sense of pointed, planned and intelligent emphasis. The longer scenes, especially that celebrated forum scene with Antony's funeral oration and incitement of the mob, are broken up into parts, interrupted, varied, to escape the formality and design on which they are constructed and by which, from a certain point of view at least, they are bound. The method and approach followed is familiar of course; its advantages and disadvantages have often been discussed.

The problem of the production of a drama, of a classic especially, is necessarily renewed for every epoch, every decade and even every season; the producer is free, at his own peril, to take any line he chooses. In the case of this "Julius Caesar" at the Mercury there has resulted a drama that is not Shakespeare's but that has a certain degree of cogency and life of its own. Essentially what has been accomplished is a hitting on one at least of the fundamental themes of the original play and freeing it from certain conceptions, motifs and qualifications, so that it is thus brought straight out into the audience, those present-day, American audiences watching it there at the Mercury Theatre. A good example of this process is the conspirators themselves. If you have no conception of what an old and aristocratic tradition means, that peculiar sense of responsibility for the social state, of public and private obligation and code, you can at least grasp the idea of revolt against dictatorship and revolution and individual rights. If you cannot conceive of Brutus, the great noble, with six hundred years of tradition, family position, responsibility and privilege behind him, you can at least see him as the meditative philosophic dreamer, high-minded, clean-souled, useful to the conspiracy, not very practical later on, contributing to the defeat of his party, dying, and then being praised by his victors as the noblest Roman of them all. And everyone nowadays is at home with that sort of gangsterish quality that emerges. It is quite obvious that in many spots the production itself, as such, sticks out—the Forum scene, for instance, with the crowd responses, or here and there during the play divers exits, stage massing, and so on—and is, of course, just as much artifice as the Shakespearean stuff avoided; but despite that fact the effect will seem to many people more natural, or at least more naturalistic.

I admired the energy, lively attack, sincerity and bold theatre intelligence in this production; but was on the whole pretty much disappointed. So much time filled up with badly dressed men, holding their hands down to their sides, clipping, when they spoke, the basic form and glow of the lines, often resulted in mere drabness. It may have increased the sense of ominousness, but it cut down the size, breadth, height, of the appeal and response. And some of those Reinhardtish motifs in the stage production were, as they often are, not so much subtle as obvious and almost banal. I had rather the time they took had been given to some of the Shakespeare cut out.

As a dictator—shall we say anti-Fascist?—drama the play at the Mercury comes, ironically enough, to very little. And for these reasons: What we see first is the growing conspiracy—greatly simplified by leaving out most of the Roman aristocratic tradition, and in the dramatic style the sonority adapted to it—and the strutting Caesar overlording all. Shakespeare justifies such a portrait, his Caesar struts, mouths and overlords, because the theatre followed here the classic theme of infatuation: the mortal confusing himself with divinity and heading toward a fall; because Muretus' Latin tragedy of "Julius Caesar," published forty-six years before and widely known, borrowing Seneca's language for boasting, had established the dialect that audiences expected Caesar to speak; and because, doubtless, practically this was the shortest cut to the dramatic motif desired. So far so good. Next in the Mercury version come the warnings, the assassination, Antony's inflaming oration, and the mob aroused. There is then introduced the scene of Cinna the poet whom the mob sweeps away because his name is the same as one of the conspirators'. The scene in Shakespeare is short, and is partly comic relief, partly an implication of mob recklessness and riot madness. This Mercury version makes a long scene out of it, writes in lines, puts in much business, turns it all into gripping sarcasm and horror. This is a piece of creative theatre invention that is brilliant, even dazzling. We jump then to the quarrel scene of Brutus and Cassius—for the rest of the play is Brutus's—to Brutus realizing his disaster, Brutus in a brief scene with the page, Brutus running on his sword, and over Brutus's body Antony's epilogue of praise.

And so eventually, again ironically enough, this new version comes to no more about the dictator theme than Shakespeare's play does. The warning given the conspirators to flee Rome, the portentous civil war, the ghost twice appearing of Caesar mighty yet, the rivalries, are all cut. But all we get in the end is the new dictator praising Brutus martyr. In Shakespeare Brutus is not a philosopher, he is an idealist. He fails to serve the purposes of the revolt not because he is a sort of strongish Hamlet as Mr. Welles plays him, but because he will not stoop to play the

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game on the level of the other conspirators, of whom, Shakespeare says explicitly, all of them "save only he did that they did in envy of great Caesar." It is further true that the idea of the state that Brutus holds and represents leans rather more to that of fascism than of a democracy, for the state—the city, indeed, of Rome (not disconnected later on with St. Augustin's theme of the City of God)—to Brutus was an entity, a thing mystically existent in men's minds rather than actually, under which we live not so much for our individual rights as for its perfection. Shakespeare's drama, if taken as a dictator play, must be ranked a failure, in dramatic proportion and structure. But it is not so. Its theme is not Caesar Dictator but Caesar Heroic, Caesar as Man. Throughout the play—the ghostly form being in Shakespeare as real as the living—he rules, and finally he conquers. The one point established by the Mercury version is one that Shakespeare in his common sense affords—and the Mercury's enlargement of the Cinna incident serves only to reinforce it—which is that the source of a dictator must lie ultimately in the people he emerges from. At the Mercury, nevertheless, is a capital event.

As to the Theatre Guild's offering of "Madame Bovary," we may recall the saying in a sacred text in India about a foolish man passing through life as a spoon through soup without perceiving the savor thereof. The true strength of Flaubert's novel lies in its absolute character of genre and its completeness of tone. In a stage version of it you are—as Dr. Johnson said of any man's calling us a liar and our knocking him down for it—free to handle it as you like, and we are free to be bored with the tosh you make of it. Within a dragged inconsequence of sixteen episodes contrived with the mentality of sweet sixteen but not its hesitancy in passion's face, Miss Constance Cummings, charmingly costumed, works sincerely and carefully to portray more varieties of experiences than the greatest of artists could compass in one entertainment. Mr. O. Z. Whitehead as the apothecary's boy, a role enjoying a fine absence of mere explicit lines, does a beautiful performance.

Of "Father Malachy's Miracle" we need only say that here is fresh, lovable and charming quality introduced to our theatre, that it needs shortening by about fifteen minutes, and that it deserves audience after audience. This story of a simple monastic brother who in the heat of an argument with a Protestant child of the militant modern religion offers the performance of a miracle, and does it, has many timely and bona-fide elements, is a credit to the humanity, devotion and intelligent policy possible within the Church of Rome, and is for divers players an acting vehicle of much advantage. Mr. Worthington Miner has admirably directed the play. The casting of the roles, a hard nut to crack, is tact and discernment personified, and the playing therefore is often better than the actors themselves might contrive or know.

The bishop of Mr. St. Clair Mayfield is something not to be forgotten. Mr. Al Shean gives a performance of this simple, miracle-working priest that is entirely from inside the idea, very exact, simple, pure and convincing. The Broadway stage is a curious thing sometimes, and often best when it derives strictly from the professional, Mr. Shean's vaudeville experience, for example. He now in this lucid and difficult role puts most of our acting to shame.

STARK YOUNG.

A Lick and a Promise

THE FUNNIEST picture of the season is called "The Awful Truth." ("It's Love I'm After" is supposed to be its twin for rollicking, but what with relentless overemphasis and crude hangfire direction I did not find it so, except for the part and person of Eric Blore.) Leo McCarey's version of one of the oldest theatrical hats—the divorced pair who come to realize that marriage was nice work after all, if you could get it back—seems to be a true director's triumph. Take this story and any actors and you could so easily get something that would serve you right; take these actors (Cary Grant, Irene Dunn, Ralph Bellamy) in any story, and you could get the same results or worse. But that is only speculation; what we actually have is thorough comedy, a whole pattern that is neither actor's vehicle nor technician's holiday. It is quite grown up, and even the hotter passions are endured with consideration and suavity; at the same time it has an innocent zest for the homely that makes you think back to Capra again.

Miss Dunne is getting a divorce from Cary Grant at the beginning, she can't *stand* that man, and presently she is taking up with Ralph Bellamy, who apparently plays a perfect Good Time Charley from the long timber without realizing it much. She keeps running into Mr. Grant, who is killingly polite about everything, even Charley and his mother—much more helpful than is necessary, and perhaps a shade too apt in showing up at the wrong times. That keeps going on, and there is a nance music teacher who makes a lot of trouble for his size and talent, a sour aunt and something about some motorcycle cops. I can't remember very clearly what they did because I was laughing and everybody was laughing and it kept going on like that.

The dialogue is good, clever or uproarious; but dialogue fades so quickly in the air, and here there is the necessary visual play to complement it. For one example from a whole picture, take the closing sequence, with the weakly latched door between their private rooms, his coaxing the rising breeze through the window to blow it open, stealthily adding the weight of his fingers, finally getting down to peer under it for obstructions and (from the other side) the girl lying awake and listening, suddenly the cat getting up and walking off in her private way, letting the door open on him kneeling there in the most ludicrous flannel nightgown. All this without a word, all clear and (in its small way) exquisitely final.

It is simply that way all through, gay and ridiculous but too serenely founded in the commonplaces of actual life to be confused with the more irritated humorous intention of those who rack their brains for gags, falls, punch lines and the cake-dough blackout. It is a foolishness that doesn't go wrong or strained, and for this the script men must be partly responsible. In the general taste, motion and final pictorial result, above all in a sense of timing that is as delicate and steady as a metronome, you can see the hand of a man who is sufficiently an artist in movies so that he can make one out of almost anything, with almost anybody.

There are lots of pictures, some of which I promise to go into when we get some space around here: "Stand-In," which is just as good as "The Awful Truth" and the sharp-

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est comedy on Hollywood low-life yet; "Conquest," which is a handsome job on love and Napoleon; "The Hurricane," which seems to contain a hurricane and bits of goona-goona; "The Return of Maxim," which is second in a trilogy, quite strong in spots, also pedantic and talky. Add musicals: "A Damsel in Distress" is absolutely the saddest of the Astaire pictures, which have been getting no better; "52nd Street" is the ripest turkey since they wired Ted Lewis for sound; on a clear morning you can smell it from here.

OTIS FERGUSON.

The Bandwagon

Testimony was offered that Bridges hit Shoemaker on the head with a gun butt, but, since the indictment stipulated injuries on "the body and limbs" of Shoemaker, Judge Dewell ordered the testimony stricken out. He ruled that the head was not part of the body.—*From a news item in The New York Times, dealing with the trial at Bartow, Fla., of the six former Tampa policemen charged with second-degree murder of Joseph Shoemaker.*

"Give capitalists another chance," James H. R. Cromwell, husband of tobacco heiress Doris Duke Cromwell, told the Poor Richard Club today.

Cromwell's mother, Mrs. E. T. Stotesbury, wife of the financier, went one better than her son by her first marriage. She gave a tip to girls of today about what to do with capitalists. In effect, Mrs. Stotesbury said: "Marry them." . . . "The best and only profitable financial transaction I ever completed was to marry my dear husband." —*From a news item in The Philadelphia Evening Bulletin.*

Citing Marlene Dietrich's great loyalty, her friends point out that she always manicures her own nails when visiting abroad, because she refuses to patronize any manicurist aside from her favorite one in Hollywood.—*News item in The San Francisco News.*

SOME OF OUR BEST FRIENDS ARE WOMEN

"The Catholic Chuch could not exist without the aid of women, but God created our sisters to aid and not direct. . . . I am not opposed to women, but I want them in their place."—*The Rt. Rev. Msgr. J. Alfred Laliberte of Central Falls (R. I.), opposing a movement to give women the right to hold office in the Union of St. Jean Baptiste of America, quoted in The Boston Globe.*

A QUESTION OF FUNDAMENTS

A. F. Whitney, president of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, and J. J. Pelley, president of the Association of American Railroads, issued a joint announcement yesterday in which they disclosed that exhaustive research had produced a type of seat which would conform to the needs of brakemen who travel in the cabs of locomotives. The announcement was hailed in Wall Street as a rapprochement between management and labor on a fundamental question, but it had no apparent effect marketwise.—*Item from the financial department of The New York Times.*

WHAT EVER BECAME OF EARL CARROLL?

Our exclusive Bain Mousseux de Jeurelle. Orchids to the success of our luxurious bath champagne. The delight of New York's most pampered lovelies. Bathing bliss reminiscent of Cleopatra's voluptuous scented baths. Poured into your tub it makes a sparkling deep froth. Bottled and packed as precious vintage champagne. Magnum in wicker basket, $5. Splits, $2.—*Advertisement of Bonwit Teller, published in The New York Times.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column and $1 will be paid for each item used. Address The Bandwagon, care of The New Republic.—THE EDITORS.

CORRESPONDENCE

Wild Words About Farrell

SIR: Mr. Ferguson's piece on James Farrell [The New Republic, November 10] was, I am afraid, an attack filled with invective, semi-thoughts and unsustained charges. Mr. Ferguson does not have it in his powers to destroy the literary tradition and it is a good thing. James Farrell has an important part in the literary tradition of this decade. Certainly he has his faults, but he is not a "youth with his notebook and mouth open" and I doubt that he ever was.

It is foolish of Mr. Ferguson to say of "Studs Lonigan": " . . . but Farrell made him the romantic hero (in reverse, maybe) of a whole trilogy and then squared it with his literary conscience by saying: Yah, what da hell. He was a slob." I am sure Mr. Ferguson wrote that in an overheated moment. Certainly no one thinking clearly would say such a ridiculous thing. If Mr. Ferguson really means it, he should be led gently to the court testimony of the Vice Society vs. Vanguard Press. Let Mr. Ferguson read for himself James Farrell's words on the witness stand as he explained his whole literary aim. That will clear up his unsound ideas about Mr. Farrell's integrity.

Too, there are moments coming in Mr. Ferguson's career when he will not want to be reminded that he considered "Studs Lonigan" "thrilling to startled professors and rather dangerously advanced librarians." . . . Surely there is much of hysteria in: " . . . where do you think the good slang and gags and songs come from, the University of Chicago for God's sake?" Surely anyone sufficiently lacking in perception to miss the worth of "Studs Lonigan" on first reading is not a particularly alert critic.

When Mr. Ferguson reviews the collected short stories, he says a number of true things. Unfortunately they are all things which have been said before, and said with a lot less bad humor. There is no reason to patronize or be nasty. Another reviewer would have been glad of the assignment.

Until Mr. Ferguson is willing to write with restraint and dignity, I think he should restrict his activities to current movies, where wild words don't matter much. . . .

New York City. DOROTHY WALKER.

SIR. . . . One of the causes of my wonder and woe has been the phenomenon of James "Tuffy" Farrell. . . . Nobody seems to realize that Farrell has been the beneficiary of a determined build-up over a period of years. . . .

In consideration of Otis Ferguson's monumental piece in The New Republic this week, therefore, I beg you to find enclosed my extra-special stream-lined, finished-in-duco, ball-bearing, eighteen-inch salute of twenty pieces. . . .

Otis Ferguson's review was much too mild, but compared to the usual one, which proceeds from the assumption that Tuffy is a combination of Balzac, Zola, Dostoevsky, Hardy, *et al.*, it is remarkable. Tuffy's Chicago dialect is not nearly so authentic as Ferguson seems to concede, and the claim that Farrell has perfectly captured the rhythms of slang is pure bushwa. When it comes to throwing a cliché, as Ferguson points out, Tuffy has no peer. This wouldn't be so reprehensible, however, if he didn't condemn practically all his

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contemporaries for the same thing. Next time let Ferguson use both barrels. . . .

Moberly, Mo. JACK CONROY.

Author Talks Back

SIR: In his review of "Three Ways of Modern Man" [The New Republic, November 3, 1937], Dr. Anders writes that he was "embarrassed" to find that I had not restricted myself to showing that Undset, Mann and Nexö were anti-fascists, but maintained further that their negative agreement implied a positive directive, making for a kind of united front in art. And Dr. Anders asks: "Does the grandchildren's alliance make it necessary for all the grandparents to be members of the same club?" The question is cute, but the analogy is misleading. I was not concerned with showing that the positions of feudal socialism, bourgeois liberalism and socialist humanism *historically* belonged to "the same club" (they didn't), but that *today* they are *ideologically* related, although far from being married. *Verbally,* negative agreement may seem not to require affirmative concurrence; actually, in theory and practice, the meaning of negative agreement entails positive polarization. That is, anti-fascism and some form of humanism are parts of a pattern. And I see nothing embarrassing in this position.

I also fear that in his emphasis on my sociological approach, Dr. Anders slights the methodological principle of my analysis. As stated in the Introduction, the book aims to reveal the manner in which the artistic process (the "how") profoundly modifies the *stated* meaning of a work of art. The most startling consequences of this principle appear in the discussion of fascist literature whose art often presents anti-fascist portrayals.

Dr. Anders makes such interesting comments on the second half of a book I might have written, that I regret he devoted so little space to the book I did write.

New York City. HARRY SLOCHOWER.

England, Their England

SIR: Why indulge in further hypocrisy about the "timidity" of England toward the fascist powers? Why not face the facts?

As far back as the memory of living man runs, one of the cornerstones of British policy has been opposition to Russia—first to Tsarist Russia and then, with tenfold greater bitterness, to socialist Russia. England furnished much of the finances and some of the troops for the invasion of Russia after the revolution. When that failed, she tried more subtle methods. Investigate where much of the money came from that put and kept Mussolini in power. Who made the gestures and prevented the reality of sanctions when Mussolini wanted Ethiopia? To some extent France, but France is not free. Who offered Italy half of Ethiopia as a gift?

Read the German press for some months before Hitler's advent to power and see the source of much of the money that enabled him to surmount the beating he took November 6, 1932. Who gave Hitler permission to build up his navy, without even notifying their allies? Who smothered France's protests when Hitler invaded the Rhineland? Who fêted von Ribbentrop and swallowed all his impudence?

Who threatened France when she wanted to sell munitions to the legal government of Spain? Who jerked the question of Spain out of the League of Nations when they seeemd likely to ask embarrassing questions and put it in the hands of the unspeakable committee of "non-intervention"? Who has presided over that committee and excluded or mocked at all evidence of fascist invasion? Whose puppet has Portugal been for more than a hundred years? Where have Franco's headquarters in Portugal been?

Who allows her ambassador and soldiers to be shot by Japan without abating one jot her politeness? Who led the United States into the trap of calling the Brussels conference, to kill time till Japan can win, as the non-intervention is killing time to help Franco?

What was the nation which, when Italy joined the "anti-communist" pact, said, "Now we must take care to cultivate our friendship with Germany and Italy"? What is the nation that originated the scheme for withdrawing "volunteers" in Spain, and what is the nationality of the member of that committee who remarked, "That will give time enough for Franco to win"?

England "timid"? She is playing the most dangerous and most costly game of her career, but one which she thinks is worth the cost by preventing the development of democracy.

North Andover, Mass. ERIC O. STARBUCK.

From The New Republic Mail Bag

Bunji Takawa of New York City deplores the standards of The New Republic's articles on the Far Eastern war and especially Willard Price's "Japan's 'Divine Mission'" (November 17). The Japanese religious belief, Mr. Takawa holds, has been artificially superimposed on the people by the army rule during the period since 1872.... Saul Bellow and Isaac Rosenfeld, both of Madison, Wisconsin, write jointly that "The Popular Front [in Spain] is striving as well as it can to prevent a workers' revolution . . . demoralizing the revolutionary workers by killing their leaders and by sabotaging fronts in their control." . . . J. V. Campbell of New York City feels that The New Republic's self-applied description "progressive" should be changed to read "Marxist."

Corwin Willson, director of research of the Integ Corporation, Flint, Michigan, expresses a doubt that Nathan Straus, as head of the Housing Authority set up by the Wagner-Steagall Act, will be able to achieve all that is hoped for in slum clearance. "To attempt to subsidize shelter for the many," he writes, "is like the attempt of men to lift themselves by their own bootstraps." . . . Fairfield Porter of Hubbard Woods, Illinois, takes issue with Ralph Bates's commentary on the nature of the Negrin government in Spain contained in his two recent articles on the rise of the Republican army. Mr. Porter's view is "that the Negrin government may be fighting Franco better than ever, but is itself in the process of becoming fascist . . . that Mr. Bates is guilty of using the same type of argument that Mussolini's apologists have been using for a long time—the trains run on time and order has been restored."

William L. Standard of New York City, attorney for the National Maritime Union, tells us of the collective-bargaining agreement that has been signed with the Black Diamond Steamship Company containing a clause in which arbitration is agreed upon before the calling of a strike or lock-out. The contract, which is to be taken—at least in this respect—as a model for future agreements, should put an end to the lobbying for government action designed to enforce mediation in the maritime industry.

Lucille B. Milner, of the American Civil Liberties Union, tells us of the Union's annual dinner at the Hotel Roosevelt, New York City, December 8 at 7 P.M. Tickets are $2.50 each. The dinner will commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the Constitution and among the speakers will be Secretary of the Interior Harold F. Ickes.

What's on the Air?

Dr. Francis Cho Min Wei, president of the Central China College at Wuchang, speaks from New York City on "The Far Eastern Conflict: A Challenge to Christianity." Sunday, November 28, 10 A.M., CBS.

Sir Josiah Stamp speaks on an international broadcast, "As I See It," from London, Tuesday, November 30, 4:20 P.M., NBC-Blue Network.

"Union Label Christmas Gifts" is the subject of a talk by I. M. Ornburn of the Union Label Trades Department of the American Federation of Labor, Tuesday, November 30, 6:15 P.M.,NBC-Blue Network.

Round-table discussions at the National Congress of Parents and Teachers are heard Wednesday, December 1, 4:30 P.M., NBC-Blue Network.

Norman Thomas speaks on the subject, "Can America Keep Out?" Wednesday, December 1, 10:45 P.M., CBS.

Musical programs of the week include the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra giving the first performance of Schumann's "Lost Concerto," Friday, November 26, 7:05 A.M., NBC-Red Network; the Philharmonic Symphony-Society of New York, Sunday, November 28, 3 P.M., CBS; the Rochester Civic Orchestra, Monday, November 29, 3 P.M., NBC-Blue Network and the Philadelphia Orchestra, Monday, November 29, 9 P.M., NBC-Blue Network.

All times given are Eastern Standard Time.

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Russia and Some Utopians[1]

TWENTY years since the October Revolution in Russia, and discussion, debate, dispute over the consequences of this revolution continue with unslaked passion. The Russian enigma seems unsolved. But the problem of finding a historian objective, competent, indeed genius enough to throw off the partisan fevers of the moment, to pass beyond the stage of the lecturer's vignette and the journalist's notebook, and paint for us the superb historical drama of the past two decades, remains equally unsolved. Nor has any moral or intellectual authority shown itself strong enough to halt the overproduction of "Me-and-Russia" books, of which Mr. Eugene Lyons' "Assignment in Utopia" is but the latest and most salient example.

The never-ending debate is in itself a strong enough symptom: what happens in Russia continues always to be a matter of worldwide, burning interest. So thoughtful men once debated, as intensely, for long years, the pros and cons, the hope and disappointment in revolutionary France, when, at the end of the eighteenth century, she too stood at the frontiers of social change. On the other hand reasonable men do not speak much of their "disillusionment" or hope for, let us say, Mussolini's Italy—because few such men expect any good to come out of Mussolini's form of government.

Today Soviet Russia still offers a picture of extremes, of violent contrasts; it is a society in the throes of "becoming," whose realities evade the frames set both by optimistic anticipation and skepticism. Enormous social gains are registered and pointed to with pride; and there are also retreats and compromises which are less freely admitted. The direct exploitation of the masses by capitalists is eliminated; but the termites of bureaucracy invade the state and breed new evils. There is amazing order and peace among a federation of some seventy different peoples; there is incessant preparation for war. There is the promise of civil liberty in the new constitution, and there is terror, a fearful armed vigilance, invoked against enemies within. Political opposition must perforce work underground. As has often happened before, muffled struggles take place within the dictatorship; but the dictatorship continues as implacable as ever. Civilian and military leaders are "purged" at great trials; and outside of Russia, the Soviet system itself is on trial.

The cosmic courtroom shifts as far as Mexico, whither the friends of Mr. Trotsky invite us to send our pennies, so that Mr. Stalin may be overthrown in Moscow. But what monstrous hair-splitting and quibbling this is, when lovers of democracy seek to replace the ruthless Stalin with the former War Commissar who once "liquidated" anarchists and counter-revolutionists, wreckers and internal enemies in rivers of blood! Will Mr. Trotsky and his friends promise us a fair hearing for Mr. Stalin and his friends, when or if they ever lay hands on them?

[1] Assignment in Utopia, by Eugene Lyons. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 667 pages. $3.50.

Russia Twenty Years After, by Victor Serge. New York: Hillman-Curl. 310 pages. $2.50.

The End of Socialism in Russia, by Max Eastman. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. 46 pages. 75 cents.

Retouches à mon Retour de l'URSS, by André Gide. Paris: Gallimard. 126 pages. 9 fr.

II

For my own part, I have been quietly celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution by reading a whole shelf of recent books which literally say their worst for the Soviet Union. A prey to human doubts, such as assail all those who are rash enough to speculate upon political-historical questions, I hoped that these books might help to "empty" my mind of Russia. If there were no Ranke among them, to give us *"die Geschichte wie es eigentlich gewesen ist,"* then at least a mere dispassionate, painstaking summary of Soviet shortcomings would have been a useful contribution to the process of appraisal. But once more we peer through a fog of partisanship. The newest denigrators of the Soviets are poor prosecuting attorneys. In their different ways, these annalists of the Russian experiment, Lyons, Victor Serge, Max Eastman and André Gide, unfortunately bring us no certainties. In some measure they create impressions which are the direct antithesis of those they intended to convey.

There is a Chinese proverb concerning the hazards of travel, somewhat to this effect: "Wherever I travel, there I find myself." To Soviet Russia some men have journeyed to find Christ on earth, and returned convinced (like William H. Chamberlin) that the Bolsheviks were confirmed atheists. Others have gone there to find a British trade-union paradise, and have come back the worse for their journey. Still another goes "in search of his soul," and rediscovers, in the depths of some uncomfortable furnished room in Moscow—let us say, the rather artificial loveliness of Elinor Wylie's poems. Eugene Lyons, on the other hand, tells us somewhat ostentatiously that at the beginning of 1928 he set off in search of Utopia, "the land of our dreams." As a sincere young Marxist he hoped that there would be no roaches in Russia.

Thus Lyons' quest, one might say, was born in error. Marx, and Lenin after him, ever since the Commune of 1871, had determined that the working-class revolution must never be Utopian, whatever else it was to be. If one were reasonable, then, one would go to Lenin's country to witness the realistic introduction of a socialist way of life in a huge, half-Asiatic country, most of which was nearly as "backward"—to Western eyes—as China; and as long indurated to terrible poverty and violence as it was ignorant of English common-law traditions or the polite procedure of bourgeois democracy. Indeed, to speak truthfully, the socialist revolution for most men has always been the hardest way, and as much of its appeal to human courage and energy may reside in its difficulty as in its promise of social justice; while capitalism seems the "easiest way," the way of sin. The one system demands self-denial, self-sacrifice, responsibility without commensurate reward, new habits of coöperation and discipline; the other system stamps its price upon every human quality, hiring and firing men, ideas or values according to the criteria of the marketplace. Little wonder that the new-old Machiavellians and political adventurers of today, who are known as fascists, generally leave the economic management of society to the capitalists, subject, of course, to their own plundering. The Russian Communists, faced with alternate possibilities for making a going concern, chose the harder way. The notion that, under the given circumstances, they would promptly arrive at something resembling a millennium, seems preposterous.

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Yet it is this notion that runs like a leit-motif through the commentaries of journalists like Eugene Lyons and even those of a great psychological novelist like André Gide.

Coming to Russia with preconceived ideas, as he himself shows us, Mr. Lyons, the former radical, worked for six years in Moscow as foreign correspondent for a great capitalist newsgathering institution. In the manner of the all-too-revealing modern autobiographer, he tells us how he entertained hopes, at the outset, of both hoodwinking his employers and helping Russia, by "playing ball" with the censorship and sending back reports more favorable than the facts warranted. Those dispatches from Moscow, which were widely syndicated in America, and which many of us read and depended upon, Lyons now confesses with a becoming repentance, were not merely something short of the whole, unblushing truth, but were "consistently and ardently partisan." As a "friendly" correspondent, he relates: "I was counted upon to hew close to the line of official information. . . . That suited me perfectly. Indeed I was impatient to serve."

But little by little the eyes of this "sincere" Utopian are opened wide. His faith departs. In the name of suffering humanity itself, he determines to embark upon a career of truth-telling as reckless and unconditional as his earlier course had been devious. Truth-telling, with Mr. Lyons, waited some six years, until by 1934, he had fallen out with the Soviet authorities and was expelled. But better late than never.

"Assignment in Utopia," at any rate, is the fruit of this high resolve, tracing the steps of Mr. Lyons' wavering quest in his own conscience and upon three continents. It is also a large, mixed salad bowl of personal reminiscences, impressions and experiences, anecdotes of bureaucratic blunders, judicial errors, current popular jokes—these very interesting and reassuring—diatribes upon Russian cooking, fragmentary investigations and statistics relative to the presumed failure of the industrial program. The book is ill organized and long; its tone of satire grows always heavier until spleen and *partis-pris* show themselves too plainly. At the end, Mr. Lyons concedes not a shred of achievement to the Socialist Fatherland.

There is verisimilitude here. So was there in the "Me-and-America" books written by visiting European authors for home consumption during the 1920's. They treated very largely of beer-running, jazz and skyscrapers, and they may have had some use-value in reflecting many "diminishing returns" in American life; but United States citizens felt that the strangers had glimpsed only a little of this broad land, and continued upon their own willful way.

But in Russia, foreign residents or correspondents, living in a painful isolation within a miltant society, face incomparably greater obstacles to understanding. I have heard Russian Communists describe them as "dwellers upon a rotten capitalist island within the Soviet ocean." Their life meanwhile, in *valuta* hotel quarters, is neither a healthy capitalist life nor a socialist one. It is from such a vantage-point that men like Eugene Lyons often fix a jaundiced eye upon the strange, bewildering Russian scene. Their attention becomes focused on political intrigue and gossip, on bits of sensational incident and conjecture, above all on the engrossing problem of creature comfort in Russia—rather than on the vast industrial and social transformation that is being carried on so laboriously. The last-named subject is in fact given some twenty pages of sketchy, superficial discussion by Mr. Lyons in a work of 667 pages. But how can we understand the implacability of the Bolshevik mind without measuring something of the social program which obsesses it and upon which it pins all its hope?

III

At his best, however, Mr. Lyons writes vigorously; and his real contributions, the most valuable, the most timely parts of his autobiography, consist in numerous, vivid pen pictures of the famous "demonstration trials" of saboteurs and political dissenters—those trials which, after shaking all Russia, have ended by disturbing profoundly the peace of literary circles throughout the United States. The political trials shock the faith of Western democrats more than anything else, more even than gruesome tales of GPU dungeons or mass expropriations. They are not accidental; they are an organic part of the Soviet credo and the Soviet institution of justice. They epitomize the fierce intolerance of Russia's "iron age" by which—this is said to be the view of the dictator, Stalin—individual destinies are as nothing compared with economic necessity and reasons of state; all political enemies and even stragglers in the industrial battle must be exterminated or punished at the will of the rulers.

From the melodramatic Shakhty coal-mine trials of May, 1928, through the recent Trotskyist and Bukharinist trials of 1937, with the secret-police work underlying them, the whole pattern has been the same for a decade. Undoubtedly the Moscow trials are designed for internal effect and stage-managed as great *dramas of propaganda.* Can we presume to judge between the innocent and guilty while standing outside of the secret police quarters? Some of the accused are patently guilty; others are simply non-conformists; still others escape with lenient treatment. But the outcome matters far less than the method of procedure, the spirit of the laws, which promises as yet so little for human liberties under new constitutions and new social programs.

Once you have studied the Soviet "demonstration trials," you sense all the deep environmental and historic differences between the Russian proletarian dictatorship and, let us say, the American bourgeois democracy. The American way and the Russian way represent two worlds and two different histories. While Americans were being conditioned as the most advanced industrial population in the world—a factor which encourages the view that our country, save in an ideological sense, would offer the most favorable ground for a socialist program—the great mass of Russians were held in a feudal ignorance of modern industry. While Americans were learning the art of self-government, with all its devices of compromise and equilibrium, Russians were being conditioned to violence by autocrats as different as Peter the Great and Nicholas II. Even in a recent "peaceful" period of five years, between 1907 and 1912, a British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, Nicholson, could report confidentially to his home office that there were over 1,500 assassinations. The proletarian dictatorship of Russia is, then, something new and old at once; there is revolutionary social change and there is atavism.

Upon the whole question of civil liberty and freedom of thought, André Gide has spoken out forcefully and eloquently, in his "Retour de l'URSS" and now again in his "Retouches à mon Retour de l'URSS." Gide, who has suffered much from conformity of thought in democratic France, fears the blighting power of a dictatorship over culture more than he does the destruction of war. He now reiterates his pleas for free speech, and defends his decision to oppose the "personal" dictatorship of Stalin. We sympathize with André Gide and do not doubt his honor; but we question his naïve surprise at finding a thoroughgoing dictatorship at work in Russia. What form of Utopia did *he* expect to find? And then, the distinctions between a "personal" dictatorship and an impersonal one seem again like the quibblings of the early Christian Scholastics. Nor

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does Mr. Eastman, in his expanded magazine article, bring us any new light on this or any other aspect of the controversy over "Stalinism."

Victor Serge, an old international professional revolutionist, in his "Russia Twenty Years After" is thoroughly worth reading if one discounts his Trotskyist partisanship. Here is a terrible catalogue of the fates which have befallen all his friends and fellow plotters. But Serge, in contrast with Gide, is calm and unabashed in his hope for new violence. After all, a professional revolutionist does not expect to die in bed. And Soviet justice has been eternally vigilant, so far!

IV

To Americans who long for the emergence of a society dominated by the class of producers, that is by farmers, manual workers and technicians, a society from which capitalist absolutes, at any rate, shall have been abolished, Soviet Russia has always seemed a natural ally, albeit an awkward one. We may learn from her social victories, while refusing to follow her errors.

American Communists, on the other hand have been put to much uncomfortable intellectual embarrassment in attempting to condone or explain away every shift in Soviet tactics. But the tactics of force—especially when the motives are obscure—seldom admit of happy apologetics. Nor are they properly the province of publicists, intellectuals or men of learning. We would conceivably do much better to dissociate ourselves, for instance, from the present system of justice being administered in Russia. The pressure of friendly opinion could be directed as far as possible to work for a gradual relaxation of the system. Obviously, this could best be done by persons who are not lending themselves to, or acting in combination with, elements seeking to overthrow the Soviet regime by new violence.

But to voice one's wish for mitigation of the harsh Soviet system of justice is one thing; to despair altogether of Russia, as some of our mercurial friends are doing, is another point which does not follow. These pessimists of today were yesterday, nearly all of them, devoted, Utopian, uncritical admirers of Russia. Experience, or more extended knowledge, has apparently convinced each one that Russian realities do not correspond with the forms of his personal Utopia. They now earnestly assure us that there is nothing to choose between the dictatorship of Stalin and that of Mussolini; that social planning in Russia is but "planned chaos"; that new "serfs" of factory and farm are being exploited by a "personal" dictator and his bureaucracy. In short, the real Soviet Russia in the flesh has proved to be utterly different from their abstract idea of her. But what is most paradoxical is that these gentlemen, who were formerly champions of revolutionary processes, now profess themselves disgusted by the fanatical violence with which a real social revolution endeavors to defend itself with all possible weapons, on all sides, against a world of enemies.

Why the sudden belated alarm and despair? Five years ago, in 1932, there was violence enough at work, when the Bolshevik command, with more logic than milk of human kindness, was carrying out an overnight collectivization of the land, dealing with a famine, and "liquidating" hundreds of thousands of kulaks. Yet at that moment (which coincided with the low ebb of the American depression) certain intellectuals here were impatiently advocating the methods of violent revolution—the very methods of Stalin and his associates—as a solution for our own pressing problems. They were possibly misinformed then concerning tragic, though perhaps unavoidable blunders wrought by the excessive zeal of Russian government officers. They were overoptimistic about Russia and too pessimistic about America.

At the present time these same gentlemen, taking a diametrically opposite position—unduly pessimistic for Russia, and optimistic concerning American conditions—may very well be misinformed again. Some of them are being all too visionary once more, in judging that only by helping Mr. Trotsky can we improve American social conditions.

The opponents of Russia, in the present-day debate, generally act as poor advocates of their own various factions when they concede too little to their adversaries. Academic economists who are opposed to Marxism, such as Professor Calvin Hoover, and other authorities, who are in no sense Bolsheviks, such as Beatrice and Sidney Webb, have returned more impressed with the scope and execution of the Russian industrial plan than by any doubts which may have come to them. William H. Chamberlin, at any rate in his tempered account of Russia's "iron age," concedes that the expansion of industry during the First Five Year Plan fell, by his own estimate, only a little short of Stalin's official estimate of 93.7 percent. The period from 1933 to the present (the Second Five Year Plan) has seen the further expansion of heavy industry by 200 percent over the levels of 1928. Some estimates, such as that of Maxwell Stewart in The Nation of November 13, 1937, run as high as 300 percent. Here is the other side of the medal: mere statistics, to be sure, which do not make for colorful reading in sensational chronicles of Russian terror. Yet, of themselves, in all their prosaic ciphers, they encompass a gigantic revolution, corresponding roughly to the industrial transformation of the United States between 1850 and 1900—yet telescoped within a decade. Americans, too, experienced tremendous dislocations and hardships, as well as the most terrible civil war which the Western world had known, during the longer process of conquering their natural resources and applying machine power to their continent.

Moving Day is never peaceful or pleasant. The Russians have been moving their house, with all its old equipment and new ideas, all its variegated population of 170,000,000 people, from the feudal age into the socialist age; and the dust, confusion, pain and the non-arrival of part of the furniture are being fully reported. Add to this the stresses caused by the abrupt collectivization of the land, which the present Russian regime decided upon for reasons connected with its own survival. Here, concomitantly with a great social revolution, there took place one of the signal events of world history, a story, epic or tragic, which still remains to be told. During the years of civil war in Russia, the Bolsheviks had felt themselves betrayed by the peasants when their grain requisitions were resisted. Hundreds of thousands of Lenin's partisans had freely sacrificed their lives in the struggle; and it was sentimental to think that the partisans of Stalin would stop at any violence in the new drive to conquer and collectivize the nation's supply departments, the whole food-raising hinterland, for the socialized state.

This "heaven-storming" program, with all its difficulties and its inspiring potentialities, no longer concerns men like Eugene Lyons, Max Eastman or even André Gide. The question remains whether it could have been carried out, or carried to its present stage—while the threat of military invasion hung over the two frontiers of Russia—by strictly democratic procedure. But even if one has no preference or apology to make for Bolshevik methods, it would seem that to liken the labor dictatorship of Stalin to the purely opportunist dictatorships of Mussolini or Hitler reveals a crudeness of judgment, an emotionalism, that is inexcusable in any student of political phenomena. Bolshevism, it is implied, is today but a replica of fascism. Would it not be

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more accurate to say that fascism from the start borrowed the worst, the most opportunist devices of bolshevism, and rejected nearly all its promising and redeeming features?

The sane view would be to hold Russia our ally, while reserving our freedom of criticism. At any rate, the value of our counsel as "outsiders" has special limitations in such a case as that of Russia. She will doubtless go her own way; and our intelligentsia have probably tormented themselves overmuch on her score. Whereas the present, intensely interesting, pregnant American scene offers the richest food and amplest opportunities—to which our native ideologues, Utopians and revolutionists have scarcely begun to do justice.

MATTHEW JOSEPHSON.

Yes, Mr. Hearst

Brisbane: A Candid Biography, by Oliver Carlson. New York: Stackpole Sons. 373 pages. $3.

ALMOST everything we are interested in knowing about Brisbane can be found in this book. It describes his background, his early character, how he became a newspaper man, what his ideas were, how he compromised with his principles, what he accomplished, what his relations with Hearst were and how much money he made.

Mr. Carlson gathered the facts conscientiously and set them down without much elaboration. Beyond that, unfortunately, he did practically nothing. The material is poorly organized and the narrative carelessly written. The analysis of the psychological factors in Brisbane's childhood which determined his interests and desires is neither full nor incisive and is barely integrated with his spectacular career. Moreover, the discussion of the social influences in the development of his mind is rather superficial, giving evidence of little study. Nevertheless, the main outlines of his life are made perfectly clear and no one can mistake their meaning.

It is a story worth knowing. Brisbane was the most widely read, the most influential and the most highly paid journalist of the past half-century. The present character of his profession was in part shaped by his ideas. The power that Hearst enjoyed until very recently was in part derived from Brisbane's talents. He knew every important man in American politics and had something to do with the activities of at least a few of them. When he died the newspapers that despised him were mildly censorious, but most of the press published fantastic elegies. The pallbearers were all drawn from "Who's Who." Nobody was ill mannered enough to say what everybody knew: that the colossus of American journalism was a corrupt and venal man.

He was the son of the radical Albert Brisbane, brought up to follow in his father's footsteps as an idealist, reformer and philosopher. Instead, he became a man-about-town whose single ambition was to get rich. That is the clue to his whole career. From the day he joined Hearst's staff, in 1897, until his death in 1936, he let no scruple of honesty, dignity or scholarship stand in the way of his acquisitiveness. Whatever his boss wanted, Brisbane wrote—not behind the defensive shield of editorial anonymity, but under his own name. When Hearst was a trust-buster, Brisbane was one; when the boss was a Red-baiter, a jingo, an apologist for vigilantes and a friend of Mussolini, he became all of those things too. When Hearst wanted to run for a political office, Brisbane enthusiastically became his stooge and go-between. No job was too dirty, no lie too disgusting for the great Brisbane so long as Hearst was willing to pay for it. He played his own little game no less cynically: in his column and through his editorial influence, he boosted his real-estate holdings so shamelessly that no publisher in the world other than Hearst would have stood for it.

Only an idiot would suppose that Brisbane actually agreed with all of Hearst's ideas. On the contrary, even at the end of his life, when he had inured himself to venality, when his cynicism had long been more than protective coloration, he had to make uncomfortable right-about-faces at the command of his boss—but he made them promptly and without apparent pain. Mr. Carlson reports several such incidents. It seems, however, that even Brisbane, with all his agility, couldn't always make sense out of what was going on in Hearst's irrational mind during the last few years, so that it became necessary for Hearst to tell his men that they could edit the Brisbane column whenever it clashed with the current policy.

Brisbane's death closed an era. His popularity was founded upon a technique, developed by himself, of writing for illiterates. No one ever equaled him at it, but no one need ever do so in the future. The unschooled masses, the Irish, Italian and Russian-Jewish immigrants who formed his audience, are rapidly disappearing. They are being assimilated and their children are being educated. A new kind of popular journalism is being created, and the workers are getting their social and political ideas through labor unions. It is thus improbable that the profession of journalism will ever again be cursed with so evil an example of success. That means, among other things, that no newspaper employee will ever again leave an estate of $25,000,000, as Brisbane did.

BERNARD SMITH.

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A Sharecropper's Story

I Was a Sharecropper, by Harry Harrison Kroll. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 327 pages. $2.75.

"I WAS A SHARECROPPER" made me grit my teeth. Its author is a white Southerner and I, the reviewer, am a black Southerner. His people and my people have glared and cursed at each other for more than three centuries over a gulf of falsehood. My people called his kind "po' white trash"; and his people called my kind "niggers." But despite this, as I turned the pages I was assailed time and again with nostalgic love and recognition for a multitude of familiar events, for black and white life in Dixie is swathed in the same daily reality. Kroll's mother, father, brother and sister are types that can be found a million times in white and black families throughout the South.

Drenched in authentic agrarian detail, and sparing neither the simple glory nor the repelling sordidness, Kroll's autobiography traces his growth in the West Tennessee backlands from childhood to adolescence, from a vagabond photographer to school teacher, and finally to his status as the author of a best-seller, "The Cabin in the Cotton." Kroll's astonishing story is as indubitably American in its flavor as is the fact of Lincoln's rise from log cabin to the White House. With a candor that is at times both refreshing and embarrassing, he tells of hunger, superstition, queer herb remedies, incest, lynching, death from sheer neglect; of his amazing and vital mother and his wistful, futile father. He relates how his illiterate family, under the spur of conditions for which poverty is no adequate name, tried to write best-selling novels, tried to invent a hair-straightener for Negroes, tried to make a new kind of ice cream, tried to manufacture synthetic diamonds and, last, tried to establish a motion-picture industry in the hills of West Tennessee. Indeed, Kroll's own escape from this Sargasso Sea of ignorance is as unbelievable as are the fantastic aspirations of his child-minded parents.

As I turned page after page I hoped that some experience would enable Kroll to see beyond the "white fog" of his hungry days; out of all the dreams he dreamed I longed for just *one* dream of what the South *could* be if white and Negro sharecroppers could stop hating long enough to find common ground for hope. But Kroll's hope is couched in these terms: "black niggers," "black sons of bitches," "nigger bucks," "fry the lard out of that black bastard," etc. To Kroll Negro "inferiority" is immutably fixed in the very moral structure of the universe. His philosophy, for all of his courageous striving, is one which perpetuates the hated system from which he escaped. He says: "I did it by lifting up one foot and putting it down, through the hours, the days and years . . . all the problems of life can be solved as simply and easily as that."

As a social type the sharecropper has become an interesting object of popular curiosity. The public, however, has had to depend for its information mainly upon research workers and specialists. But in the case of Kroll the usual procedure is reversed; the object of curiosity turns the tables by reporting ably the life of his own people. In doing so the incredible facts of "Tobacco Road" and "God's Little Acre" assume a new value, inasmuch as they are for the first time strained through the imagination of one who has actually lived the life he depicts. Yet I hope he does not become a prototype that the masses of white sharecroppers of the South will want to follow.

RICHARD WRIGHT.

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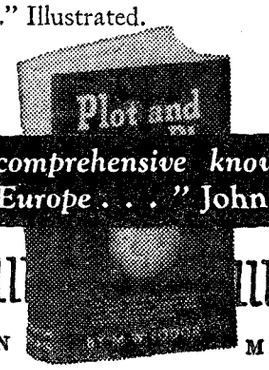

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Murder Strikes Three, by David MacDuff. New York: Modern Age Books. Paper, 25 cents; cloth, 85 cents.

Red Feather, by Marjorie Fischer. New York: Modern Age Books. Paper, 25 cents; cloth, 50 cents.

NOT SO many years ago, certain American book publishers attempted to increase their profits by issuing some of their new novels at the retail price of $1 each. Neither their profit nor the population of the book-owning world was sufficiently expanded to make the plan a success. Though several factors contributed to this fizzle, not the least among them, to my mind, was the fact that the dollar novels they published were of inferior quality and appropriate to the shelves of the lending library rather than the private library. The problems of distribution, of course, figure largely in publisher's price-fixing; as a result, publishers still retail novels for $2.50, often not because of manufacturing costs but because they say that such books will not sell any more copies at $2.

In the face of such a situation, a new firm of publishers has established itself with a program of printing and marketing in huge editions new imaginative literature and new theoretical works and reprints at modest prices. Under the house name of "Modern Age Books," these publishers have just released several titles, including a number of novels that are attractive in format and well designed; two of them are illustrated. Even the paper-covered copies are protected by jackets and appear more durable than their French counterparts. But what makes this publishing venture revolutionary is that the contents of the books are substantial, too.

Any publisher in town should have felt fortunate to list among his fall novels Emmett Gowen's "Old Hell." Because of its theme and implications, this story of Southern mountain folk is suggestive of Caldwell's "God's Little Acre"; yet it has a daffy wildness entirely the author's own. Even if you hadn't read Gowen's two earlier novels you would be certain, because of this one, that the author knows and is a master at telling of these poverty-degraded, cuckoo mountain dwellers, of whom Old Hell himself is an unforgettable representative.

Richard Wormser's novel suggests fresh possibilities in popular-fiction writing. With the pace of an adventure story and the suspense of a mystery story, "All's Fair" is concerned with the activities of an undercover union organizer in a tough, anti-labor mining community. The circulation of pulp magazines will be lowered and the tastes of their readers improved if more action stories of this caliber are printed. "Murder Strikes Three," by David MacDuff, is a straight mystery story that is not only ingenious and exciting but exceptionally well written. Finally, there is Marjorie Fischer's "Red Feather," a delightful fairy story for children from eight to twelve, illustrated by Davine.

Such fictional works as these, varying in their audience appeal but uniform in their honest workmanship, renew one's hope that the millions of Americans who have been cut off from owning or even reading good books may now be reached. Furthermore, the existing novel-conscious public whose incomes have so far made them dependent on rental libraries, on reprints and remaindered novels, may now get a break.

LEANE ZUGSMITH.

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Zola Americana

The Chute, by Albert Halper. New York: The Viking Press. $2.50.

HERE IS the story of the people who fill the orders sent in by the yokels George Milburn wrote of in "Catalogue," to whom the mail-order business meant so much. But it dominates the lives of these workers in quite another way. The employees of the Golden Rule Mail-Order Company are at the mercy of the chute, a relentless maw which has to be constantly stuffed with outgoing merchandise—so we are shown the panic of the floor, the order-pickers dashing up and down, "Killer" Howard furiously dumping his truckload into the chute, and all the while the chute bells ringing madly. The place is one of the chief sources of the American neurosis of haste. The bells condition the people like Pavlov's dogs, and the chute gives shape even to the games they play at parties. It gorges the living qualities of them all, and actually takes the bodies of two of them during the course of the story. As a Moloch-symbol it is sometimes rather obvious and crude, but for the most part it is gruesomely effective.

The people of the story, the workers and their bosses and even the owners, are all living characters, though within the limited range of photography. The one who figures most centrally is Paul Sussman, a Jewish boy who is too poor to follow the architectural career he has dreamt of in that city where Louis Sullivan has left his distinctive signature. Paul's older sister has been secretly putting away part of her salary so Paul can go back to school, and for his sake refuses to marry the boy she loves. But she has to marry Moe when the contraceptives the Golden Rule catalogue lured her to buy prove to be worthless, and Paul unknowingly loses his last chance to use her money.

Paul's future is deducible from the lives of his immediate bosses, whom the company holds with promises it never intended to keep. His only hope will be in something like the union that was being formed before a stool-pigeon betrayed the organizer. Halper has an informed understanding of these problems: even if this company fails, these workers whose lives are netted in the gray Chicago streets will find other companies and other chutes to swallow them—until they organize against this doom. It is too bad Halper presents his story in such a slovenly way: it takes a long time before the interest partly offsets the sloppiness of the writing, and it is not a book that will be picked up again as a finished product of literature would be. Yet it was good to know these people during the glow of the reading, to be given a deeper understanding of their predicament, and an insight into the potential human goodness of most of them.

HARRY THORNTON MOORE.

My Word

Understanding the English, by James Howard Wellard. New York: Whittlesey House. 237 pages. $2.25.

IT IS a popular belief that under the feudal system the English were a lusty, uninhibited people who led a gloriously pagan life until Cromwell came down on them with a chastity-belt and turned them overnight into a dour tribe of Boake Carters. This belief, in its most extreme form, leads to dreams of hearty yeomen grouped around oaken tables, swilling nut-brown ale, bussing the landlord's daughter and roaring out superbly obscene staves about King Stephen's breeches.

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Part of Mr. Wellard's book is an attempt to contrast a tradition-ridden England today with such a nostalgic vision of the past. Not only does he paint the usual picture of lusty vulgar life in Chaucer's time; he even goes so far as to deny that any class-consciousness existed, citing the "Canterbury Tales" as evidence because they record a pilgrimage in which all classes joined with no thought as to precedence. To do this is like drawing the same conclusion from our own daily pilgrimages in the subway, while ignoring literary evidence of our snobbishness—just as Mr. Wellard ignores Chaucer's melancholy comparisons between the "blisful life" led "by the peples in the former age" and the haughtiness and envy current under the feudal system.

In his picture of contemporary England Mr. Wellard is much more successful. Even though he continues to generalize, and draws an overdepressing picture of humorless, rigid, middle and upper classes, still he has many flashes of excellent humor and the knack of hitting the nail on the head time after time. He first discusses the problem of whether the bulk of his countrymen are human beings at all and, having grudgingly given them the benefit of the doubt, goes on to list their ways of mating, breeding, eating, etc., with special emphasis on their consideration for accents, and secret clues through which the foreigner may detect phony Oxonians or distinguish between the Hollywood English butler and the real thing. He also supplies what the English movies have lamentably failed to bring to America: some idea of the homes and humors of the less privileged classes. And he gives glimpses of the United States as seen by the English press ("Armed only with bows and arrows the Indians hunted Dillinger in the wilds of Wisconsin") and examples of official denouncements of the perversive effect of American moving pictures. ("I cannot refrain from commenting adversely on the pernicious and growing habit of . . . youths to use Americanisms, with nasal accompaniment, in order to appear, in their own vernacular, *tough guys.*") Finally he describes the places in which the traveler is most likely to find a less traditionalized England, with special emphasis on the lesser known music-halls and pubs.

RICHARD VAUGHAN.

Contributors

HARRY WEISS served the NRA in various capacities as an economist, but primarily as adviser on labor policy. He is now senior technical adviser for the Social Security Board. His article, of course, represents his purely personal views.

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS is a practising physician in Rutherford, New Jersey. He is the author of several books of verse and a novel, "White Mule," published last spring by New Directions.

FREDERICK P. ATWATER is the pseudonym of an American who is living in Brazil.

MATTHEW JOSEPHSON visited Russsia in the winter of 1933-34 and boasts of being one of the few living tourists to that country who did not write a book for or against.

BERNARD SMITH has contributed essays and reviews to many periodicals in this country and abroad.

RICHARD WRIGHT, who has published stories and poems in The New Caravan, The New Masses, International Literature and American Stuff, is on the staff of The Daily Worker and New Challenge.

LEANE ZUGSMITH is a short-story writer and novelist. Her most recent book was "Home Is Where You Hang Your Childhood," a collection of short stories.

HARRY THORNTON MOORE is literary editor of The Beacon, Chicago's liberal magazine.

RICHARD VAUGHAN is a young Englishman who has written and translated for a living both at home and in this country, where he is now living.

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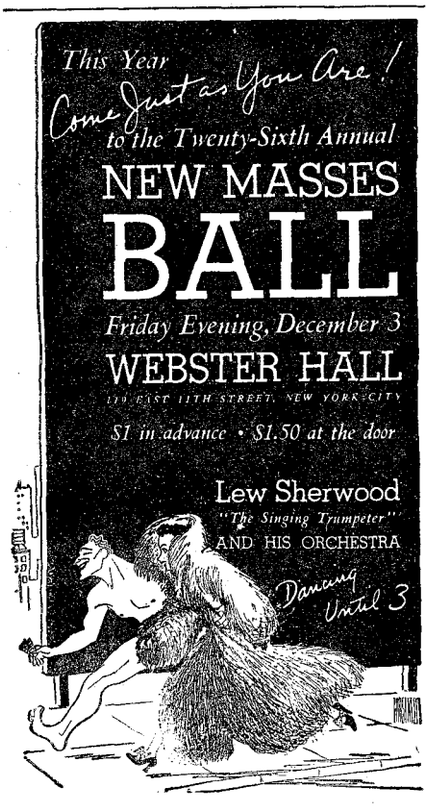

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